

A Night at the Memorial Museum

Started November 29, 1978

"Wha-a-a!??!!! HELP," yelled Harold. He was a night guard in the Memorial Museum. The couch in the spacious lobby was moving all by itself. And a chair was slowing moving from one side of the room to the other. Harold signaled the other guards, Moe and Joe and Frank, on his walkey-talkey. "The couch and the chair are moving," he said, "without anyone moving them!"

"You mean, no one's around?" asked Frank.

"Yeah. No one is here, but me," replied Harold. "Frank and Moe, you come over to me in the lobby. Joe, you stay put."

Frank and Moe said, "O.K. Meetya there in a minute!"

As soon as the men got to the lobby, Harold said, "Let's call Miss Wiggs." She was the director of the museum. Frank ran to the desk phone and dialed Miss Wiggs's number. When she heard the phone ringing, she mumbled, "Who could be calling at this hour? It's three o'clock in the morning!" She picked up the phone and said, "Hello?" She sounded brisk, but didn't feel it. "Miss Wiggs, this is Frank, the night guard. Harold has seen things moving in the lobby! The chair and the couch! But no one or thing is moving them! By themselves!!"

Miss Wiggs, who is terribly tidy, and who gets frightened easily, but usually doesn't show it, said, "Oh, I thought a dinosaur was falling. The couch and chair are moving?!!" she asked frantically.

"Yes! They stopped as soon as we turned the lights on."

"I'll be over there right away," said Miss Wiggs. It sounds like you might need some help."

"We'll see you in a minute," said Frank.

"O.K.," she replied.

Miss Wiggs got dressed and left her house all in a fluster. She lived next door to the museum, so she got there in thirty seconds. She rushed into the lobby and said, "Here I am! Which chair was moving?"

"The rocking chair with the big springs." answered Harold.

"You haven't seen them move since then, have you, Harold?" She always called him Harold.

"No. They haven't been moving since. As soon as we turned on the lights, they went back to their original positions."

"Since they're not moving anymore, I guess I can go back home. You can return to your patrols now, but if anything more happens, call me immediately, and if it's a real emergency, call me out the window!"

Things were quiet for an hour or so, and Miss Wiggs was able to get some sleep. Then about four-thirty,

some objects in the bathroom started to move mysteriously. First the towel ring started to move slowly. Frank just happened to be checking the bathroom and thought the wind was moving it. He licked his forefinger and held it in the air. No wind. "That's funny! There's no wind, and yet it's moving, and now it's moving quickly!" All of a sudden the towel ring stopped in the up position, but there was a clanking sound. Frank turned around and saw the cabinet mirror sliding back and forth, back and forth. He tried to look inside, but it moved faster, so he couldn't. It stopped. Everything was silent for half a minute. Then the door began to swing open and shut, open and shut. He really got frightened. As soon as he got to the door, it stopped moving, and no one was in sight. Frank shouted for the other guards, "Moe! Joe! Harold! Come quick! To the rest room!"

Running footsteps signaled the approach of the guards.

"What is it, Frank?!" asked Harold.

"Quiet!" whispered Joe. "I hear footsteps."

They were hushing all the while. The footsteps got louder.

"Who is it?" demanded Frank in a hoarse whisper.

"'Tis I, Miss Wiggs," a voice responded urgently. "I heard the commotion! What's the matter?" she said in an Irish voice.

"Mysterious goings-on in the rest room, Mi-i-i," started Frank. He stopped speakign suddenly because he heard distant sounds slowly becoming the sound of footsteps.

"Who goes there?!" said Miss Wiggs firmly.

"It's just me, George, the janitor."

"Oh, George! You startled us!" Miss Wiggs sounded relieved.

"I heard all the commotion. What's it about?"

"Frank has seen things moving in here," said Joe.

"What things?" asked George.

"Well, the towel ring, the cabinet mirror and the door," said Frank.

"I can't figure out," said Harold, "why all these thigns are moving around in one night. The couch and the rocking chair in the lobby were moving earlier tonight."

"No strings? No lever? No recent behindments?" questioned Miss Wiggs.

"Behindments?!!" puzzled George.

"Oh, that's my own special term for the way things work on the inside. Hidden behind the door on the shelf. Whatever," explained Miss Wiggs.

"We haven't been able to find any," said Frank. "I looked earlier before any of you came here."

"Would you like me to help you look?" asked George.

"No, George. You get on with your work," replied the director. "But keep your eyes and ears open for mysterious happenings. Meanwhile, we will talk."

George left and the group kept on talking.

"I have an idea! Let's call Helen Wood and Hash San. They started a detective agency a few days ago." Miss Wiggs sounded hopeful.

"I'm with you!" Harold said. "Let's go to the lobby and call them. Ladies first!"

"Thank you." Miss Wiggs walked along first, (she saw things first, too) with the others behind. "Eie!!!" she screamed. "The golden statue...it's gone!! From the Mummy Room!"

Moe swallowed hard. "Now we really have to call the detectives."

Harold ran very fast to the lobby desk phone and dialed Helen Wood and Hash San's number. It was now five-thirty. First a nibbling, then, "Meow." Another rattle. "I'm getting a voice. A cat's voice. Wait....I hear something!"

"Hello?" It was Helen Wood.

"My goodness! Who was that just now?"

"That was Hash San¹, my cat. You must have mistaken him for a person. I'm the only one who can understand him. He's quite old and very wise. He's my partner."

"Your partner is a cat?!!" exclaimed Harold.

¹ Hosh Son - is the correct pronunciation. It means, Mr. Hashimoto

"Yes, a very nice one. He's a Siamese cat, and very intelligent. I talk with him about detective work, and he told me how to talk with cats."

"Come over right away, please, to the museum. A golden statue is missing, and things have been moving by themselves."

"We'll be over immediately."

They did arrive immediately. In four minutes, in fact.

"How's that for promptness?" Helen asked.

Miss Wiggs met Helen and Hash San at the door. The cat did indeed look wise. "Thank you for coming so quickly," Miss Wiggs said.

"No problem at all," said Helen.

"Meow," added Hash San. "That meant, 'Yes, it was very easy.'" Helen said. "Tell me what happened."

"Things in the rest room and in the lobby were moving," said Harold.

"What, for instance?"

"Well, the towel ring and the mirror in the cabinet, and the rest room door. And in the lobby, the rocking chair with the big springs, and the couch," said Harold.

"Don't forget that stolen statue, the only one we've got, and it's very precious," added the director.

"Meow. Meow. Me-ow!"

"That means, 'Should we get going now, or should we wait?', Miss Wiggs," explained Helen.

"How about having a quick breakfast with us, first, in the museum cafeteria? We can make plans while we eat, and then we can get started with solving this problem," offered Miss Wiggs. "The cook and a waitress are up-and-at-'em at 5:45 A.M., so there is no difficulty in getting food."

"That would be fine. A detective can always work more effectively after a good nourishing bit of food. Hash San will have a big bowl of Cream of Wheat Cereal. He thrives on it."

The group set off for breakfast eagerly. "You know, I have been thinking," said Miss Wiggs. "Why didn't George see that the golden statue was missing, and tell us?"

"You're catching on to being a good detective," said Helen. "One has to consider ever single tiny thing. Wait a minute while I meditate."

After a few moments she asked, "Who is George?"

"Our janitor," answered Miss Wiggs.

"He may not have been in the Mummy Room?"

"How did you know that the golden statue was in the Mummy Room, Miss Wood?" asked the director.

"Hsh San was poking around while we were first talking. He communicated with me."

Moe looked askance at Hash San. He did not believe a cat was capable of doing such intelligent things. The cat stared knowingly at Moe, as if to say, "You will see....."

"That would be my guess," said Helen. "He just wasn't in that room, so he couldn't know it was missing. And besides, why should he notice if something's missing? He's not that familiar with the objects, is he?"

"No, he cleans the rooms, but doesn't clean the objects there. Besides, he's not authorized; we have a special person to do that sort of thing."

"What did the golden statue look like?" asked Helen.

"A mummy," said Miss Wiggs.

"What is the minimum amount of space it would take up?" asked Helen.

"Well, it's approximately three feet by one foot, so that it could fit into our wall safe that's hidden behind a painting. Also it would go into our heater vent. It opens. Or, our P.A. speakers."

"Since everyone's finished eating, let's check out the wall safe," suggested the detective. They proceeded to the hallway leading from the cafeteria. The safe was located in that wall.

"I'll open the safe," said Miss Wiggs. Frank offered to move the painting aside on its hinge.

"Nine - four - six - eight - three," she whispered. The door opened creakily. "Not in here," she said.

"Let's check the P.A. speakers, then," said Helen.

"Well, the only speakers that the statue could fit into are teh ones in the Dinosaur Room," said Harold. "The others are too small. There are buttons in that room which you press to hear what the dinosaurs sounded like."

"Off to the Dinosaur Room!" said Helen. "How many speakers are there?"

"Three," answered Miss Wiggs.

"We'll check each one. Would you like to check out the first speaker, Hash San?"

"Meow."

"O.K. I'll check the second one, and Harold can check the third one."

They all agreed. "I could take some extra excitement," said Harold.

No statue was found.

"Well," said Helen in desparation, "we still have the vent. Which one is large enough to hold that statue?"

"The one in the Phenomina Room," said Harold. The group walked quickly to that room, and upon inspection, no statue could be found.

"Miss Wiggs, you look exasperated. Why don't we sit down by the fireplace in the lobby? There are some

comfortable chairs there. We can get our heads together and work on another possibility," suggested Helen. The idea was welcomed by all.

As soon as they sat down, they started to think what could have happened. Helen cried, "There are two problems here: one of them is the moving objects; the other is the missing mummy. I wonder if one is related to the other. It would seem likely, since both happened in the same time period."

"One person could not carry that statue. It's too heavy," said Harold.

"What moves heavy things?" asked Moe. "A dolly," he answered himself. "The museum has one to move statues and such around."

"That's right," said Miss Wiggs. "We keep it in the storage room. Moe, would you please see if the dolly is there?"

"Of course, I'll be delighted to. My pleasure."

"Oh, would you stop saying those things, and get on with it," said Miss Wiggs.

"You can count on me, Madam."

"Moe! Just get on with it," said Miss Wiggs, with exasperation.

He started to walk away, but Hash Shan jumped on his back, (this did not thrill him) and meowed.

"Stop!" called Helen. "Hash San is trying to communicate something. It could be a clue."

"Meow."

"Oh, yes."

"Meow, meow, mer-ow."

"That's interesting. Tell me more."

"Mer-ma-ow. Meow."

"People, Hash San has told me he found a hook on the heart here. He wants me to pull it. Shall I?"

"Yes!" said many voices.

She pulled the hook. A sudden jerk, and the floor where the chairs were, started to move to the right. They found themselves going through an opening in the wall. It appeared instantly. The astonished people could not speak or move. Before they knew it, they were in total darkness!!!

"Fellow guardsmen, let's take up ballet dancing." Moe was trying to hide his fright with jokes.

"Stop being silly, Moe!" said Helen, as she struck a match.

"Sorry," said Moe in a meek voice. They were in a room that was pretty small. Helen said, "Let's search the room. Hash San, where should we look first?" "Meow, meow." "That means, 'In the dark corner of the room.'"

"I never knew this existed!" said the amazed director.

"Let's see if pushing will open the wall, if we have to get out in a hurry," suggested Helen. They pushed. It opened, and they saw a shadowy figure run

away. "Let's catch him," said Helen. They all ran after the figure.

After five minutes, Helen said, "It's no use. We'll never catch him. Let's go back to the room." They went back.

"Mur-eee-owww."

"What's that?" said Helen.

"Mur-eee-owww."

"O.K. Let's look. WOW!!! Come here, quick!" In the fireplace smokestack was the GOLDEN STATUE ! ! ! And some switches and a dolly.

"Group!" said Miss Wiggs. "I just saw George, with a smirk! Let's chase him!"

All agreed. "But, we'll run. Starting the car would take too long." They went on for a while, but he stopped at a house and flashed his lights. "Signals to an accomplice, maybe?" wondered the director.

"I doubt it," said Helen. "He's probably tricking us into thinking there's more than one person involved. If we think there's more than one, we might think that they will hurt us."

George had already gone into the house while they were discussing the occurrence.

"Let's try to get in the house where George went, and if we can, we'll look for him and surprise him," said Helen.

"Assuming he's the culprit, I wonder why he's done all this?" said Miss Wiggs, half to herself.

"Yes," said Helen, "why?"

"Is there an echo in here?" said Moe.

"People," said Harold, "let's hurry. And Moe, this is no time for jokes."

George had stopped at an old mansion, with many broken windows. In fact, one window had no glass, and was wide enough to crawl through.

"Since the door is probably locked," said Harold, "it might be wise to go through the window. That window with no glass."

"You are learning to be a detective quite quickly, Harold," said Helen. "Now let's go. Quietly."

They tip-toed to the window and crawled in with some difficulty. They found themselves in a musty old cellar, with had nine-hundred and fifty cobwebs. They were in pitch darkness.

"I have a flashlight in my pocket," said Harold.

"So do I," said Helen. "I use it for detective work. I just love night jobs!"

Click Click.

"Wow! Look at all the cobwebs" said Moe.

"This is a spooky place," whispered Joe.

"Let's split up," suggested Helen. "There's a stairway. When we get upstairs, Frank, you come with me. Miss Wiggs, you and Moe and Harold stay together."

We'll check out all the rooms, if there are any. But we'll need a signal, in case we find George, or if one of the group gets hurt. Joe, you come with me, too."

"Frank and Harold, use your walkey-talkies," advised Miss Wiggs.

"Right," the two men agreed.

"O.K. Since we're all set," said Helen, "let's go upstairs and see what we can find."

When they reached the stairway, they found that many of the stairs were cracked. "We'll have to be careful," said Moe. "It looks like it's going to be tough."

They cautiously climbed the stairs, sometimes getting their shoes stuck in the old, damp wood.

Finally they reached the top of the stairs. Blocking their way was a door. The wood was old and rotted. It opened easily, but with a few screeches.

Helen said, "Shh. No talking."

As the door opened, it revealed a long, narrow passage-way with doors on either side. Helen said, "Let's go into the groups we decided on. Frank and I and Joe will take the right side, and you three take the left. Look into all the rooms, but remember one thing: no, remember everything, but remember this especially: be careful! Hash Shan, you follow behind us and see if you can find any clues on the floor, like footprints."

The two groups started checking the various rooms. It was a fairly long corridor, and near the end Helen announced, "There is another hallway behind this door."

As soon as they had checked all the room, they proceeded into the newly-found passage-way. It was not very long, bu there were rooms going off on either side, and one at the end. Using the same checking system as before, they searched the side room, and all entered teh room at the end of the hall-way.

Suddenly, the door slammed shut! They heard the click of a key turning in the keyhole!

Since this apparently was the only exit in the room, except for one door which might be a closet, they were trapped! "Let's check this door," said Helen. Harold opened the door. Upon entering, they found that it was a closet, and it had a fairly low ceiling. In fact, everyone had to crouch (except Hash San, of course. . .). Other than that, the closet was room.

Suddenly, Harold grunted, "Oof!" He had stumbled over a handle on the floor.

"Harold, are you alright?" asked Miss Wiggs.

"Yes," said Harold. "I only stubbed my toe on this hookus on the floor. I wonder what it is?"

"Let's find out," said Helen.

"Meow." Hash San pulled at it with his left front paw.

Helen said, "Let me try, Hash San." She pulled. Up came a section of wood from the floor.

"Wow!" exclaimed Moe. "I wonder what is below this opening?"

Suddenly Joe, who was near the edge, lost his balance. "Whoah! OOP! That hurt!"

Helen asked, "Joe, what do you see?"

"Nothing."

Frank said, "Hey! There's a ladder!"

"Let's all go down," urged Helen. "Follow me."

"Meow!"

"Oh, you," Frank said. "I'll carry you."

"Purrrrrr..."

Helen had a bright idea. "Let's all use our flashlights now." Click-click!

Miss Wiggs said, "I'll go first." She led the way down. Then she gave an exclamation. "Look! Cupboards!" The crew gathered around, opening individual doors. "Inside this one, there's a safe," she commented.

"It will take a long time to crack the code," said Helen. "Let's go on for now and come back for the safe later." Everyone nodded and they continued down the corridor. As they went on, it got darker and darker. it seemed very long, and seemed to curve and zig-zag. Hash-San, running ahead, came to a door.

"Meeeeeowww," he yowled.

"What?" said Helen.

"Meeeeowr,"

"A door, you say? Hurry up, everyone!"

They all came jogging up behind.

"What's behind it"? asked Harold.