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The Children See Ghosts

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Bridgette Luke
Logan, Utah
November 19, 2018

“The Children See Ghosts”
Occupational Folklore/Memorate/Legend

Informant:

Bridgette (Gette) Luke is a coworker and good friend of mine. She is a host and busser at Herm’s Inn, a local breakfast hub in Logan, Utah, and has been working there for a few months. Born in 1989 and a Cache Valley native, Gette lived in Seattle for a few years before moving to Logan during high school, and has been here ever since.

Context:

“Herman’s Inn,” as it was initially called, made its debut in the early 20th century, with the exact year and date unknown. Built and founded by Herman (“Herm”) and Elizabeth (“Lizzy”) Johnson along Canyon Road, Herm’s Inn was, at one point in time, quite literally one’s last chance to “gas up” before entering the mouth of Logan Canyon. Decades later, after over half a century of neglect, Herm’s was bought and restored by local businessman Jim Laub to revive the building and its glorious history. Reestablished in 2012, Herm’s Inn is now a popular breakfast and lunch destination for those who know how to find it. Despite its unassuming appearance and quiet location within a residential area, Herm’s holds a colorful history, including an underground whiskey operation during prohibition and age-old notions of the building being haunted.

Herm’s Inn is now home to a collection of old stories and legends that still circulate around the Valley today, not to mention a series of newly developed jokes, traditions, and numinous experiences among current employees.

I interviewed Gette along with five other coworkers from Herm’s in the living room of my apartment. The setting of this group interview was very casual: we were all circled around my coffee table, drinking beer and wine, as we often do on our evenings after work. The incident described here had occurred less than a week before the interview and had already spread widely across the restaurant in a matter of days. Most, but not all, of the people in this interview had already recently heard this account.

The other pieces from this interview can be found under the following names: “The White Figure,” “Tired of Talking to Ghosts,” “The Pantry Door,” “Haunted Coffee Spoons,” and “The Heroin Spoon.” I also interviewed the owner, Heather Santi, and manager, Andrea Steffes, about their uncanny experiences at Herm’s, which can be found under the following titles: “The Ghosts of Herm’s Inn,” “The Moving Lockers,” “The Black Figure,” and “Something Down the Stairs.”

Text:

So we had an event on Saturday after work, me and Mira and Andrew [another server] and it was like a wedding reception, and all the little kids were playing downstairs by the bathrooms and we kept bein' like, "Guys, don't play downstairs." So as they're going downstairs, Heather [owner] was like, "Uh, just so you know, there's a ghost downstairs!" That's all she said, just trying to scare them. A couple hours later, they came up and told Mira like, "Oh we saw the ghost!" and she was like, "Oh, did you? What did it look like?" [referencing the three kids' response:] "Like oh it was an old man...in white..." [pause, eyes widening and scanning the room for a reaction] Without us asking, what, like, "was it a guy or a girl?" Like the little girl was like, "yeah, it was an old man..." So...apparently the ghost is Herm. It's the ghost of Herm...It has to be."

Texture:

Gette was very expressive here, changing tone to mimic different people in the story, and leaning over dramatically, making eye contact with everyone in the room. Gette is incredibly outgoing, and an active bearer; ergo, such dramatization is not at all abnormal. It was difficult to distinguish whether she actually believed in the ghost, or whether she just simply enjoyed the theatrics of giving this account. It *was* evident, however, that she was very comfortable as she told the story, lounging on the love seat in my living room and drinking wine. Everyone else in the room was doing the same, taking in the drama of it all.

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