

# Dangerous Jade 1

Well, I guess I'm well and truly a Vagrant now, since this makes two months in a row that I've submitted something, but I couldn't resist the topic of spooky stuff. I've had a few things happen in my life that qualify as spooky. The first time that I ran into the inexplicable was on my way to camp when I was 9 years old. My mother and brother and I, along with another adult and Gay, a girl my brother's age, were on our way from Iowa to Illinois. We stopped for the night at a hotel and got two rooms, with the girls in one room, the guys in another down the hall. About 10pm that evening there was a knock on the door, but when I answered it, no one was there. In fact, it was an empty hallway with no hiding places nearby. We figured it was the guys playing tricks and when the knock came again about 30 minutes later, I whipped open the door to catch them at it, only to find no one there again. Gulping a little, I looked at my mom, who just shrugged. At the third knock, I was looking under the door and saw no feet, but I did see the door vibrate with the knocks. Yanking open the door, I saw, again, no one. When we tried to call the front desk, the phone was dead. Hummmmm...

We got into bed and tried to sleep, but about 15 minutes after the lights went out, I heard a low moan. My mom was asleep, but Gay was awake and we whispered urgently about where it was coming from. The moaning got louder and we got more nervous, so we woke up Mom and she also listened. "It's coming from the back wall", she said. "No, it's coming from the other side", Gay said adamantly. I thought it was coming from above us. Just about then, we heard a man's voice say "SHUT UP OR I'LL SHUT YOU UP!!!" Instant quiet in our room as three females held their breath. No sound for about 5 minutes then the moaning started again. "SHUT YOUR MOUTH OR I'LL KILL YOU!!!" Yipes! We tried the phone again. Still dead. Damn. The night wore on and we tried to sleep, but the woman moaned and cried, while the man got more and more violent. Finally, when we tried the phone again, we got a dial tone. Dialing 0 for operator, we got a woman's voice, "Yes?" "We have a problem in our hotel room." "You'll have to dial out." "Is this the front desk?" "I can't help you, I can't help anyone." Dial tone. Yipes again! Dawn was approaching and the cries were getting more and more pitiful. Finally, we could see from our window a phone booth. Some poor sap would have to go out of the room to call the police. My mother volunteered Gay to go. She paled visibly but gamely left. Soon she came back to the room. "They said they'd send someone." We sat and waited, listening to the moans and then, suddenly, silence. About 3 minutes later the cops showed up and after talking briefly to my mother set about checking each room. Not only was there no one in distress, but there was no one in either room around us. They checked the whole floor, but no room had a man and a woman in it. There was no floor above us and below us was the lobby. The phone suddenly worked fine, too.

The story would have ended there if we hadn't had breakfast at the restaurant across the street. As we chatted with the waitress, she casually mentioned the fact that some woman had died in that hotel the previous year, bleeding to death from internal injuries caused by her spouse, and aren't some men scum...

When I was about 12 years old, I had a very vivid recurring dream of a school, and in this dream I walk along a corridor, looking up at a stairway that ends in a wall, a chapel with a wooden spiral staircase and little girls wearing plaid uniforms, walking down corridors giggling, but when I try to touch them, my hands go right through. In my dream,

I run up a staircase with another girl, tear down a hallway and into a classroom, where I sit down behind a conference table and, looking at the other girl, I heave a sigh of relief and say "Just made it!"

Believe me, I'd completely forgotten that dream by the time I was 18, although I had written it down, as I often did. In fact, I never thought about it again until I went to Vancouver, WA to go to airline school. The airline school was located in an old Catholic girls' school that had been converted to offices on the first story and the airline academy on the second. The first day, there I was sitting in the ladies' room and looking at the window when I had the strongest feeling of having been there before, but I couldn't for the life of me remember when. It was only when I was on the tour of the building when I came to the stairway to nowhere that my dream came back to me, complete with goosebumps. About a month later, I found myself racing up the stairway, late to class, along with my roommate and ran into the classroom, collapsing into the seat with a sigh of "Just made it!"

As if this weirdness wasn't enough, I stayed late one evening to practice my computer skills. On my way out, I walked downstairs and past an old woman scrubbing the bottom step. She was dressed in a black habit and seemed intent on the task. I apologized for stepping in her water and as she looked up at me, I realized that she was a nun. I stammered another apology and backed away, while she continued scrubbing. When I mentioned this incident to the vice-president of the school, she asked me if the nun looked like this, and led me to a portrait in the lobby. Yes! It was her! She told me that the nun was the first principal of the school when it opened and she died of a stroke when the architect changed the shape of the building from a cross by putting another wing on it while she was on vacation. When I mentioned the dream I had had, she said that the attic of this building had been the dormitory for the littlest children and there had once been an incident where about 14 little girls had died of mysterious causes. She suggested that those were the girls in my dreams that I couldn't touch. I don't know. I just don't know...

As the topper to this story, I had three roommates while I went to school, one of whom came from Iowa as did I. She was a very pretty girl, with a serious boyfriend in Iowa, and a mother and twin brothers in Arizona. She and I got along famously and when school was over we promised to stay in touch, so she gave me her addresses and phone numbers in Arizona and Iowa. The next week I tried to call to tell her about the new job I had, but there was no such number. Every letter came back no such address, including letters to her boyfriend's address. She never called the school to see if they had a job offer for her. The school was unable to contact her, and none of her previous roommates ever heard from her again. Later, when I moved to Phoenix, I looked up the old address I had for her. It would have been a vacant lot, out in the desert. No home had ever been built on it. Whatever happened to her? Why would she have gone to the school, paying an arm and a leg for nothing, since the placement program was a big part of the cost? Was she on some weird witness protection scheme, or something? I'm sure I'll never know.

Life's weird. I've seen iced tea jars levitate over ten feet, seen "people" vanish in front of my eyes, been burnt by thin air, felt invisible hands on my body and heard invisible feet climb stairs, seen pumpkins light themselves in front of my eyes and seen a face come out of a mirror. All I can say is - ain't life interestin'?

Dangerous Jade was written for publication in Apa-V Number 12 by Aileen Forman who can be reached at the usual place of 7215 Nordic Lights Dr. Las Vegas, NV 89119.