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March 30, 1983

## THE STORIES

It was the last of fall. It was raining outside. The leafless branches were scratching against the side of the barn, the wind, whistling through the cracks in the wood. Everything was making a sound that seemed to be an evil drone. When all of a sudden there was a loud clang. It sounded as if it was coming from the back of the barn. We all turned, it was so dark we could not see a thing. It sounded again! This time it sounded as if it was about a hundred feet away to the left. We were afraid to move. I did not want to take the children out in the storm, but I could not figure out what else was in the barn. I turned, looked, but could see nothing in the dark. It sounded again! This time it was only feet away. I threw the door open and pushed the kids toward the road, but before shutting the door I turned and looked and saw the man my husband killed because of me. . .

Everyone always reacted the same to my aunt's stories.. She could be so believable and serious. The same people were here as there was the last time. The two ladies that lived next door, the old man that lived down the street, my cousin, Sarah, and my aunt's son, Charlie. He had probably heard these stories before but he was still scared. My aunt had been having these gatherings of hers once a month for years. Everyone always loved coming. There were always new stories to be heard and to be frightened of again. I had heard the previous story about three years ago. She loved telling the story because her late husband always had the fear of being cheated on. She was always faithful but because she was so beautiful, he was really jealous.

One of the ladies that lives next door started telling her story. . .

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I was just a young girl at the time, I was very active and went swimming every day during the summer at the river nearby. The guys were always bothering the girls. They would attack us under the water and pull us under. It always scared me but it was still fun. I met a nice guy during one summer. His name was Eddie. He loved the outdoors. He was very adventurous. One night after a party Eddie wanted to walk me home. It was a cool evening and Eddie slipped his arm around my shoulder. It was very comforting. We decided to stop in the front yard of this old house. At one time it belonged to my grandfather but it had been deserted for years. The night sounds were so pretty. The crickets chirping, the wind rippling through the leaves, the cove sound of the waves slapping against the bank of the river. The howl of a dog at a nearby farm. Eddie started pulling my shirt off. . . . All of a sudden Eddie jumped up. He startled me by backing up slowly. I turned but I did not see anything. I looked back at Eddie. He seemed to just be staring at the house. I got up and moved closer to Eddie. I saw it too! It was a light in one of the second story windows. We could see the shadows of the two people in the window. It seemed as though the man was choking the lady. I began to scream. The light went out. We just stood there as if frozen to the spot. The front door opened, a tall man appeared from the doorway. I turned and I started running. Eddie just stood there. I stopped, afraid of what was going to happen. The tall man approached him. Eddie pulled something from his pocket, it was too late. The man just raised his hand and brought it over Eddie's head. I heard as it hit his head. I screamed again, he heard me and started advancing toward me again. I ran, the moonlight was

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only bright enough for me to see a few feet ahead. I stumbled and fell. I could barely walk. I hid behind some bushes barely able to breathe. There he was standing right in front of the bush. I looked up into his face. I could barely make out the features of his face. I turned and ran down the remainder of the slope toward the river. He was right on my heels. I hit the water headfirst. He grabbed my ankle. I could go no further. I turned and looked into his face. It was my grandfather who had been dead for ten years. I passed out with him holding my arm. . .

I had heard her tell a story about her grandfather before. She was at her grandfather's deathbed and was terrified of him dying.