

Ghost stories 'the red room'



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When I read a ghost story I usually notice that they are set in an old remote place and that the action usually happens at night. The ghosts themselves are usually people who have died a tragic death or have been involved in evil. Ghost stories are usually written to make you feel scared and uneasy. Normally they do this by building up tension and leaving you in suspense before the climax. There are usually clues which help you anticipate and predict what will happen next.

Most of the authors of ghost stories add things like ghostly events, strange deaths, unexplained coldness, the absence of light, and strange coincidences to emphasize the closeness of danger. I like a good ghost story to be really enthralling and I wouldn't be able to put the book down. In most ghost stories the setting has got quite a lot of influence in what happens. Typically ghost stories are set in old, large, remote buildings miles from the nearest source of help. Both these stories live up to this expectation.

'The Red Room' is set in an old castle full of 'old fashioned furniture' and candles. Likewise, when the protagonist in 'Farthing House' arrives at the retirement home she feels that 'a door opened into the past'. Moreover, 'Farthing House' is set in a remote village far from anywhere. Another feature of most ghost stories is that the action is set at night. There is no exception in 'Farthing House' and 'The Red Room'.

All the events described in 'The Red Room' occur at night. H. G. Wells uses a lot of words that are associated with night: - 'blackness', 'subterranean', 'shadows', 'moonlight', 'darkness over head'.

'Farthing House' was also first seen at night. We are told that 'the red sun was setting' and that 'the last light was fading in the sky' when the house is first seen. Ghostly events happen later that night. There is a contrast between 'The Red Room' and 'Farthing House' because the protagonist of 'Farthing House' sees the building at day as well as at night and in 'The Red Room' the castle is only seen at night.

Another characteristic of ghost stories is that they often build up suspicion by emphasizing the strangeness of the characters. In 'The Red Room' the 'grotesque custodians' are decidedly odd: 'They seemed to belong to another age, an age when things spiritual were different from this of ours, less certain; an age when omens and witches were credible, and ghosts beyond denying. Their existence was spectral; the cut of their clothing, fashions born in dead brains' and leave a sense of suspicion. One of the custodians had a withered arm, which makes you wonder what had happened to him.

These characters are unlikable and reasonably unfriendly. By contrast, in 'Farthing House', the housekeeper is a friendly person -she welcomes the protagonist into the house and tries to make her feel comfortable. But she also behaves strangely: 'It's a lovely room' she said with hesitation' implying that she is worried about the room. This makes the reader predict that strange happenings are not far away.