

The House on Elmridge Lane

At exactly 1:11, the doors to the house on Elmridge Lane creaked open. Just a slight bit. But enough to interest anyone who walks past. The house, making anyone with the common eye blind due to its enchanting madness. You would never guess you were walking to disaster. Instead it looks like paradise. A great, emotional paradise. Peak inside the house and not only can you see doom, but maybe the soft, silk curtains draping from the window frame. Maybe the marble cooktop and the obsidian microwave and oven. "What's so bad about the house?" You might ask. Well nobody has been there in over 67 years. Realtors have tried to sell it but once you go in you never go out again. You were wiped clean from the face of the Earth. Like a digital drive taken to the trash icon on the bottom of your computer screen. The most mysterious thing is that there is no trace after you had ever existed. Nobody remembered you. Not your family. Not your friends. Not your enemies. Nobody.

All but one have managed to not succumb to the house's sweet sound of death. Marjory Wissman was a middle aged woman, luscious black hair, and pale, round eyes with bouncy eyelashes that could make you fall in love with just a simple blink.

She purchased a grand area of land. And built the entire house with just the help of a homeless man who used to construct apartments a few years back. He was a great construction worker, really. However, one tragic day the site he was working on mysteriously caught on fire. No one knows why. Not even firefighters could find the cause of the tragedy. Almost everybody perished. He survived because his parents were military workers and had taught how to get out of any difficult

situation. He wasn't very smart, number smart I mean. But man, I haven't heard of anybody with as much wisdom and life skills as this one man. Marjory loved him very much and spoke with him every Saturday on her way back to her lonely apartment after her quick grocery store run. She always brought him four bottles of Fiji water, three bags of party sized potato chips, and a box of fried chicken.

One day she finally worked up her courage to ask him if he would construct her house while handing a full plan of what was desired. Joe being the kind man that he was, agreed but asked for something in return.

"Sure but I would like to ask you for something," he said. "Of course, what do you need?" She inquired. "Well, would I be getting paid? I mean I really need the money but I'd do it for free if that's why you were coming to me." "No, no, not at all. Of course I was planning to pay you. The reason I came to you was because I know that I can trust you to really make my dream come to life. I would also really love for you to come live with me, I mean it would get very lonely just to be there by myself. And I would rather for you to be there with me than anybody else." She replied with a soft, reassuring tone. Joe smiled at her but after hearing those words he was determined to find a way for her to not feel lonely in that house. Even when he wasn't there.

June came around and they had finalized the exact plans for the house. June came around and they had finalized the exact plans for the house. By July, the first floor was framed. By August, the walls stood proud and tall, with their fresh scent of paint. By October, the house was complete. It really was a masterpiece. The dainty, white furniture glowed in the reflection of the crystal clear windows. The air smelled faintly of lavender and something else no one could place. Something... older.

Joe moved in first, just to make sure everything was “set right,” he said. But three days later, he was gone. No sign of struggle, no blood, no note. Just vanished. And so did Marjory, exactly one week later.

And then, silence.
Many, many years of pure, cold silence.

Then after so many years, a young college boy who goes by Elias Crane, was walking back home through the rustling leaves one November afternoon. He was a junior in Sharywich College, in a small town just off the coast of Philadelphia. His mother mysteriously died when he was very young and his father left him for some disgusting prostitute who lived in Washington. After that it had just been him and his grandma for as long as he could remember. And he liked it that way. It was peaceful and he had someone to care for so he felt important. But he knew she wouldn't be there forever and was in search of his next big thing. The next thing to occupy himself. To worry about. To feel connected to in any kind of way. But he could not find it. He had hoped that it was his college career, well it was his dream since he was in 8th grade, but for some reason there was always a huge gap in his life that would not be filled with anything else. At least he thought.

Elias plugged in his earbuds to his phone and pretended to text even though his phone was dead since he hadn't charged in in two days. But he didn't really feel like talking to anybody. He didn't feel like looking at them at all.

Although he wasn't fully aware of his surroundings a silhouette beside him made his heart beat and chest tighten. He turned slightly. But just enough to view the house. The house on Elmeridge lane.

He looked at the time. 1:11. He looked up again and sure enough the door creaked open. Something called to him but his grandmother had warned him about this house. Warned to never go near it.

But for some distinct reason it looked familiar. Too familiar. Like a deep *deja vu* you'll never seem to forget. He just assumed he had seen it in old story books or something and tried to continue walking. But every step he took, he paused, looked back at the house and felt a kind of attraction one only feels when it's true love. But this wasn't love, this was something different, that couldn't quite be put into words.

Finally, he gave into his madness and walked closer and closer to the houses' entrance. He stood there. At the wooden porch with his hand clutched to the metal doorknob. Just pausing. And then shaking. He couldn't resist this pull. And because of this, the slight opening in the door became bigger and bigger. 'Till he managed to fit in his legs, torso, arms and head through the wide entryway.

Once he was in he realized his fatal mistake. But the door shut behind him and was nowhere to be found.

"Wait, the door was there two seconds ago. How is this possible?" He said in an awfully panicked voice. He looked around and inside, the house was pristine. Not a speck of dust. Not a single crack in the glass. It looked like it had been waiting for someone to come home.

Surprised, he yelled out a simple, "Hello?"

"Hello Elias" said a silhouette of a woman with long, black hair and blue eyes glared at Elias with a slight grin in her pouty lips.

"Who? Who are you?" Elias asked, even though he knew exactly who she was. She was Marjory. She was the missing person. Who was now looking at him as if he had known her forever.

"Don't be scared, my child. I promise to keep you safe as long as you are with me." She said with that soft, reassuring tone that he recalled so clearly. "The house has kept you away from me for so long. But now we can finally be happy. Together."

"No, No, I don't know you! How do you know me?! Get me out of here!"

"Elias listen I know that you are scared and confused. But you have to believe. I promise to answer all of your questions. And your answers are just down those stairs."

Marjory gestured to the clean, gray stairs and then looked at Elias back in the eyes hoping for her desired answer.

"How do I know I can trust you? And what about my grandma? She still needs me." Elias said panicking more now than before.

"Hey, If the house and I were able to get you here in the first place what makes you think we can't quite down your worries." Marjory reasoned.

He was frightened, but that sense that he felt before. That void that he needed to fill. That feeling was gone. And with this in mind he continued on and persevered through his fears to uncover the deafening secrets of this mysterious house.

