

My Freaking Scary Old Elementary School by u/theauthorJLCC

This morning I passed by my Alma Mater elementary school as I walked from the bus terminal to my childhood house. It has been 20 years since I came back to my hometown. I have been an overseas Filipino worker for 20 years. To be honest, I didn't want to go home because my mother and I had a violent quarrel before running away from home since I was 15 years old but she died last month and I want to at least visit her in her grave.

My hometown was blessed with a large river on one side and fertile land on the opposite. As far as I could remember, my hometown used to be a fishing port and a major rice producer yet those things were just in the past. Right now my hometown is a relic of past glory, filled with abandoned warehouses, empty complexes, rice mills, and empty rotting fish ports. Many left the hometown before, only the old folks and few stubborn families remained. My mother was one of those. We, all the three sisters, live in the overseas. Two in the U.S., and I in the U.K.

But, elementary school is the highlight of my story now. I wanna share with you the three legends of that school, and my experience with them.

I first heard about them as early as 1st grade, during one of the casual lunch talks with my friends. At first, I didn't believe them, rather I thought my friends were bullying me as the shortest of the gals. Let me start with the nun.

This happened during my fourth grade. I was assigned to the room cleaning duty, along with my 5 classmates. There was a time when the math teacher took his sweet time scolding the whole class for failing his periodical exam. What can you expect from the lowest and dumbest section? So, our class stopped when it was almost dark.

Fearing the wrath of our terror advisor teacher, we frantically rushed to clean the room. Me and Pete were assigned to throw the empty trash bins. We used to have this square concrete incinerator, and the students were tasked to burn the trash every afternoon. I know, we were not that environmentally friendly in the 1980's.

It was the time when Pete and I had almost finished burning the trash, when I heard snapping of the branches and dried leaves, I spun and was surprised to see a nun walking

toward us. She was young, beautiful, with blue crystal eyes. She wore black veil, tunic, scapular and white coif and gimp.

She greeted us with a gentle smile. I replied to her and almost approached her to kiss her hand, a gesture of respect children used to do towards the Catholic priests and nun, when Pete suddenly grabbed my wrist and pulled me and dashed away.

I remembered cussing on him because he, being a kid twice my size, his dead griped my tiny wrist was painful and I could feel my bone was about to crush. My school shoes were not suitable for running, I was stumbling on the uneven clay. And, in my mind, I didn't want to be rude to the Sister.

“Stop! Stop!” I was shouting at him.

“What is wrong with you?”

But he continued running and told me not to look back. I didn't believe it, and with all the strength my tiny body could, I stopped him and lost his grip.

“What are you doing?” I snarled at him.

“What are you doing?” His reply almost made me counterpunch his chubby cheeks.

“You are crazy! I will go back and bless the Sister.” (The term “Bless” is a verb in my culture akin to “Mano po” in Tagalog. It is a Filipino gesture of respect.)

“No, you can't turn around and look!” He protested vehemently.

“She is a Sister!” He shouted.

I spun and saw no one standing at the incinerator. I remembered being confused and the hair on the back of my neck stood. Pete held my hand and insisted that we must run before it was too late. His words didn't register in my mind. I was thinking whether I was just imagining the nun.

When suddenly something cold gripped my right leg, and I reflexively looked down. I know this happened a long time ago, yet the memory is still clear to me. It was a hand

sticking out of the dark soil, tightly gripping on my ankle. The skin was bluish white with cracks that revealed dark rotting flesh and there were worms wiggling out of some skin. The smell, it was more awful than the rotting animal carcass.

My body immediately shut down, my heart was thumping hard inside my chest and I was catching my breath. I did not know what to do. The horror overwhelmed my mind.

Pete, my hero, immediately embraced my small body and lifted me up and shouted:

“Sister! Sister! Please spare us! We are not your students!”

He kicked the arm many times before it let go of me. Then, sprint as fast as he could toward as he carried me. We went straight home and we told our parents. Neither did we assign room cleaning again nor went to the incinerator where we met the nun.

Legend has it that in the 1900s, the nun used to be a teacher in that elementary school but was a menace and spiteful to her students. She used to lock “naughty” children in the closets for hours or whipped them with thick leather belts. One day, one particular student whom she hated most reported her to a priest and she was severely rebuked. In revenge, she buried him alive. That was the crossing of the line, and she was cursed to never go above the ground for eternity. It is said that she lured students with her beautiful apparition, and her main body would grab and pull them above the ground to do whatever evil she wants.

As for Pete, his family relocated to Manila and we never met again.

The second urban legend involved the comfort room of the now gone old Gabaldon School Building located at the center of the huge quadrangle of our school. It is said that it was the oldest infrastructure in our school.

One day, nearing the end of my 5th grade school year, we were asked by the principal to clean the said building in preparation for the graduation day of the Grade 6 which was scheduled the following 2 days.

That involved hand scrubbing the smooth concrete floor with cloth, dusting the stained glass windows and designing the stage with cut out paper letters - all were done manually back then.

I was cleaning the comfort room located next to the backdoor, when I heard a shout of a man, barking at me to finish quickly. It was like someone using a megaphone and shouted right in your ear. I spun around immediately and saw no one was there.

That really freaked me out. I could feel the chill crept down from my neck to my spine and I had goosebumps despite the heat wave of noon Sun.

I immediately got out of there and dashed to my other 9 classmates. I was trembling as I told them but they all laughed. They were teasing me, the only girl, by calling me a scaredy midget. Yeah, I didn't get my growth spurt in elementary.

So, to prove me wrong, they all went to the comfort room and opened the door.

There, facing them, was a headless tall man wearing a traditional "Barong Tagalog" outfit with shiny brown shoes floating above the toilet bowl.

We raced toward the main entrance and locked the door, and went straight back home. I could not sleep that night and I refused to go to the bathroom without my sisters accompanying me inside. The principal scolded us the next day but we never told her what happened.

Legend has it that the building was originally the only classroom used for instruction for all the ages in the 17th Century. There was this half Filipino, whose mother was a slave native and father a Spaniard official, who was the first teacher there. Although he was raised in a die hard Roman Catholic and received education from prominent schools in Europe at the time, he looked down at the natives and despised them so much. Perhaps because his real dream was to teach at the University of Sto. Thomas.

He would lash at them, insulted them and oftentimes refused to teach them but had them clean the building. He was a notoriously slavedriver guy and would shout at anyone who worked slow. It was said that one day a frail girl was scrubbing the floor slowly and got the attention of the said teacher. He grabbed a stick and straight up hit her head. She died on the spot.

"You are all pathetic! You are all animals! You don't use your head! You don't deserve a head!"

He shouted at all of them.

It was said that when the night came, a giant bird visited his manor and plucked out his head. Then, the bird dropped the body to this building. He was cursed to stay in the building until his head will return.

The building was destroyed during Supertyphoon Haiyan (Yolanda in local name), and not a single pillar left in the area.

The last is the old principal's office.

There was an old abandoned principal's office at the edge of the school grounds, right next to the bamboo forest. It was said to be built during WWII.

Now this is the most dangerous for me.

It was the beginning of my 6th grade when our advisor suddenly went absent for 1 month. No one knew the reason, and the principal took over handling our class. Even she didn't know either what happened to him or what his reasons were.

You see, our Grade 6 classroom was a newly built classroom near the old principal's office. I was sitting near the window and the office was in my view.

It was really looking at an old and empty wooden office with broken stained glasses and hanging wood frames and a chained double wooden door. Old dried leaves and some old papers trashed the wooden porch. Somehow, no light appeared to touch the building even in high noon due to the tall trees towering over it.

Now, there was a strict rule that no student must enter the perimeter. There was a barbwire fence around it and a huge sign of No Enter on a rectangular plywood.

The first one and half month were fine, but all changed in one rainy afternoon class.

Our history teacher was discussing when suddenly we were disturbed by a loud booming and echoing laugh of a man from the abandoned building. Dread immediately embraced

me - goosebumps, chill in the spine, shivering all of it, I experienced simultaneously. Somehow, I felt danger immediately worst to previous two I had experienced

I was glued to my seat, I didn't know what to do. My teacher quickly grabbed me and pulled me toward the corner away from the window where the rest of the class compressed together. She then ran and locked the door, and told us to never leave the room.

After laughing for another few minutes. The voice suddenly muttered names. It was a cacophony of echoing voices in different pitches and volumes. It was hurtful to hear despite covering my ears. Some of the names were anonymous to me. However, 5 of my classmates' names were mentioned. Some of my classmates recognized their friends, relatives and even parents or grandparents names. When our teacher's name was called she immediately dropped to her knees and cried.

I didn't know at that time what it was all about. I was completely drowned in unexplainable horror and dread. Some of my classmates cried and wailed.

Then, a candle lit up inside the abandoned building and the voice stopped.

That day, our class was cut short and we were immediately told to go straight home. Not a single class was held again in that room near the old principal's office ever since

I mentioned that it was the most dangerous legend in our school. Looking back, I naively thought it was just a voice - that the dreadful feeling I had was only brought by being caught off-guard of that bizarre experience. However I was gravely wrong.

Two of my classmates who were called died the following week due to severe illness.

The other one died that weekend when his arm got caught up in the rotating wheels as he was helping his father in their rice mill, pulling him toward the mouth of the giant machine.

The other one died the following week also. It was said that he was on his way back home from school (their house was in the middle of a rice field) when a mad carabao suddenly charged him and its horns impaled him right in the middle of his stomach. There was neither a doctor nor a rural health unit at that time.

The last died the following week also. She was shot by her father, mistaking her to be a giant rat.

As to our history teacher, she died in his sleep. It was said that they found claw marks on her neck.

No one knows about this last school legend. Hence, I cannot give you an explanation. As of the old principal's office? I don't know if it was still there.

Right now, the elementary school is closed. Perhaps, no more children left in my hometown. Perhaps, some people finally knew what our town really is. Perhaps this forsaken cursed school and this dying town were a reminder of the filth where our forefathers built it upon. All those dark secrets, unforgivable sins, spilled blood and hidden bodies finally covered this town by their wrath. Robbing it of the abundant waters it once depended from and the fertile lands it was once proud of.

But I apologize, this is all I want to share with you.