

Recently I had become aware, that my line of work is of no merit. At best, impractical; at worst, an utter joke. I should be the last to think such things, as I would do well not to reject what my life is built upon. However, in the complete absence of skepticism from my peers, I myself had to adopt such an unforgiving state of mind.

Although I've been working with the "supernatural" for such a length of time that I struggle to recall memories untinged by its tendrils, my idle thoughts had become ingrained with questions that never before needed answers. Could I have been mistaken many times over, explaining away unusual but natural events with paranormal conveniences? Over the past few months I fell into a depression because of this. And so I had thought that this most recent job would be my final, but upon its conclusion, I am unsure. Bewilderment leaves me wondering whether my depression has left me, replaced by a revitalized love for my work; or has it strengthened, still lurking behind this cloud of lasting confusion? I'm entirely uncertain.

For now, I can only make a record of the events of this most bizarre excursion.

Three weeks ago, on the first Monday of June 1932, I received a call in the early hours of the morning. I had been in deep thought throughout the weekend, and at the time, I picked up the receiver with the intention of it being the final time; I felt a weight vanish from my heart at that time. I only needed to fulfill a single last request, and then I could leave the worries plaguing me behind. As I held the phone to my ear, a man immediately greeted me with a nervous tone, and indicated that he required professional help.

I introduced myself as Kurt Beschinov, and he reciprocated with his own name and explanation of who he was: Martin Infrei, an evidently wealthy man who lived peacefully in a grand mansion, close to Brimmington, several towns over. He spoke hurriedly of strange occurrences in his home: concerning noises of unknown origin, strange movements in the air, both felt and seen, and further common oddities. Infrei pleaded for an immediate inspection, having nowhere to turn but my name, which has evidently become widely known concerning these matters. I ensured the bumbling man that I would make great haste in alleviating his concerns, planning for a late afternoon arrival, should the trains have no undesirable circumstances.

After repeating several times that he and his family would be safe following my pending arrival, I managed to end the call, and immediately prepared to depart for Brimmington.

The station was as busy as usual I discovered come noon, but the place is no stranger to me, and I was soon leaving on a wonderful LMS Royal Scot locomotive; a ride I took often and on which I slept easily. Time passed quickly, and I soon awoke at the small Brimmington station

while the clouds grew heavy. Expecting unfavourable weather, I made no time for detours, instead heading straight for the Infrei residence. Mr. Infrei had promised fine hospitality, and I could expect a warm meal waiting for my arrival, which - although I am not wont to expect exceptional hospitality - I admittedly was very much looking forward to that dreary day. I indulged upon the services of a taxi cab that sat outside the station and directed the driver down several streets and eventually onto a decaying road, soon leaving the quaint town via a scarcely-traveled exit. Before long, a magnificent building- a palace!- came into sight in the near distance. The rain began to fall as the cab ascended the slight slope of its lengthy driveway, and after paying the driver his due, the rain had already strengthened its fall so greatly that I ran the short distance to the grand entrance doors, yet still found myself uncomfortably doused.

I knocked loudly on the burly wooden door that gave the impression it could withstand a siege, and it was shortly opened by an immaculately dressed man, whom I immediately recognized as a butler. Seemingly, the man had been waiting for me; he politely lead me down a long hallway and into a spacious and extensively furnished living room. Seated on the wide couch was Martin Infrei, along with his wife and three children: two young girls that looked to be near the onset of their teenage years, and a younger boy who's mind appeared to be elsewhere. Mr. Infrei gave me a delighted welcome upon my entrance, and his wife and daughters followed suit with politeness. Following the formalities, I was invited to a grand dining room, or perhaps it could be called a hall, such was its scale and grandeur. A fantastic meal was prepared for us, and despite the unusual circumstances of the visit, being in the house of a family I was entirely unfamiliar with, the taste of such a strife-less life was a sensation that will be tough forgetting.

The rain and wind grew ever more ferocious as I dined, and the darkening skies that could be seen from the windows clearly discomfited Mr. Infrei; however, I recall notice of a strange discrepancy in the atmosphere, it being that the other four members of the family shared not in Infrei's cowardice (although I truthfully felt such a distasteful judgement at the time, perhaps fueled by an obtuse jealousy of the well-off man, I now regret in this and feel that Mr. Infrei was entirely appropriate in his fear). From my initial impressions (and more so than just impressions, my analysis, for - as always - my mind had been in full swing from the moment I arrived at the residence), it appeared that Mr. Infrei was alone in his experiences of the paranormal. As I concluded my meal, the storm shutters were shut by several servants at a signal from Mrs. Infrei, who had been smiling and talking animatedly throughout the meal, perhaps in an effort to maintain a peaceful atmosphere - it wouldn't be presumptuous to assume that with my presence came a sense of "wrongness" in the household; a physical manifestation of the metaphysical torments that Infrei had been enduring. Now cut off from the elements, a

softness enveloped the room, evidently prompting Mr. Infrei to reach his limits and bring to the table the main course of the day: the reason of my being there.

Mr. Infrei inquired as to what I planned to do for the remainder of the evening - how I was to pursue fulfillment of his request. The rest of the family didn't interrupt, recognizing that the casual atmosphere had finally dispersed. As no oddities had yet appeared to me at the time, I began my investigation as was customary in jobs of that kind, and told the family that I would like to speak to them singularly and privately, if it would be permitted. I explained that learning the accounts of each person individually would guarantee the greatest level of objectivity regarding the recent events, and Mr. Infrei agreed enthusiastically with my proposition. I thought it efficient to speak to Mr. Infrei last of all, and so asked Mrs. Infrei if I may speak to her foremost. She agreed, and we exited to a hallway, then into a small study.

I judged that speaking to Mrs. Infrei would reveal most easily to me whether the unnatural events that I had been told of had been limited to Mr. Infrei's perception. If Mrs. Infrei hadn't noticed anything unusual herself, then it was quite possible that Mr. Infrei's mind was simply suffering of an illness. I asked her of what she had experienced, and she revealed that while her husband regularly had many frights throughout the recent nights, she had only ever heard silence and saw nothingness where Martin had heard the footsteps of a spirit and saw shadows of the indescribable. I asked her about each specific event known to me, the ones Mr. Infrei had told me about over the telephone, but Mrs. Infrei had experienced nothing at those times; only Martin's shaking as she consoled him after the fact. As I spoke to her, she let down her mask of joviality, and from her growingly pained expression I could see that she was indeed severely worried about her husband. I asked about her feelings, and she said she was very concerned about Martin, but could do nothing except to act normally and attempt to keep his mind from the problem. I told her that her attitude was commendable, and that I would do my best to reward her efforts by freeing Mr. Infrei from the phenomenon - or his own mind, whichever it may be.

Following the interrogation of Mrs. Infrei, I felt quite strongly that the situation was clear, and that the following day I could leave Infrei in the capable hands of Joseph Martyner - a psychologist I've worked with often throughout the years. I would stay the night, and if no phenomena presented itself to me, I could be confident in my deduction that a psychologist would be best to help Infrei. Feeling a comfortable finality to the job already, I continued going through the motions, next speaking to the two daughters. They both told me much the same as their mother did; their father's outbursts of unwarranted terror were difficult to leave

unnoticed, but no unusual happenings had occurred directly to the children. The younger boy had already been put to bed at this point, but his testimony would likely reveal nothing of value, as the girls had said that he too had been acting normally. Returning to the dining room, I remembered the servants, and asked Mr. Infrei if they happened to sleep their nights within the grounds themselves. He affirmed that several of the servants commonly live on the first floor of the house, being that they may be needed at any hour, and the Infrei residence offers more convenient dwelling than any nearby establishment in Brimington. The butler I knew of lived a short distance away, but three other servants were presented to me as Mrs. Infrei explained that they were the ones currently living within the mansion. Two of them were young girls, and the other was a rather elderly gentleman. I asked one of the girls if I could speak to her first, and she agreed quickly, immediately leading the way to the study; a strangely enthusiastic reaction, I thought. I intended to quickly speak to the three and confirm that they too hadn't experienced anything of note, just to be thorough, but when we reached the study and I had closed the door behind me, the girl spoke before I had a chance.

She firstly apologized for her rough manner, which I assured her was permissible, and then told me that she was named Rosa Marylyn and was working as a maid to earn money for schooling. Before I could inquire myself however, Rosa went on to explain that the situation was urgent, as the strange circumstances that Mr. Infrei had been speaking of were, in fact, grounded in reality.

I was very much perturbed after hearing the account of Rosa Marylyn. Contrary to what the Infrei family - save Mr. Infrei himself - had told me, Rosa spoke with exasperation of strangeness that was eerily in line with Mr. Infrei's own descriptions. To be specific, Rosa told of how, within the depth of night, impossible noises could be heard from above. Infrei had spoken of the same phenomenon, though he suggested that the sounds came from all directions. Assuming a, at least partly, physical catalyst of the auditory "ghost", it appeared that it remained close to Infrei himself as he slept. Rosa elaborated with a recollection of the night before last, when she was organizing a storage room on the third floor late at night (the very same floor where the Infrei family's personal rooms were located); as she afforded herself a moment of rest, her ears picked up the peculiar sound of heavy footfalls coming from the hallway. She had already been hearing noises for several nights, and perhaps if she were more confident that they hadn't been her imagination, she would have more seriously avoided her work that night. Alas, she was suddenly much closer to the phenomenon than she liked, but she could only slip into a corner and still her heart in hope of the foot-falls soon fading. At this point I could not help but

to interrupt her for sake of a pounding question, that was: why were you afraid so of the footsteps of what could surely only be one of the other seven in the household? A grimace formed on Rosa's lips, and she assured me that such heavy, haunting, unhallowed footsteps could not be made from human feet. Nor could the clinking of a heavy chain, like the tendrilous shackles of the devil come to constrict you, be so misconstrued as to facilitate the terrible fear that she had felt at the time. And finally, how could it be so easily explainable when, upon the petrifying turning of the doorknob and awful creaking of the door as it opened, what followed was a complete absence of presence when she jumped to her feet and peered into the hallway? Rosa pointed out that no human could disappear so effortlessly as to leave behind not a single pattering footstep, and I was inclined to agree. And yet, sadly, I could not (or did not want to) believe her words, and so as she made to exit the room, she left me with: "Regardless, you yourself will discover this truth tonight, Mr. Beschinov."

I could do nothing but remain seated in that room as I collected my thoughts after Rosa left. I became keenly aware of how large the house was; how dim its long hallways were, and how deeply the silence penetrated. The storm outside, which had been building in ferocity all the while, felt so incredibly distant that I had the strange impression that, were I to try, I wouldn't be capable of finding my way back to the outside world. The old wood creaked, and thought I heard the croak of a voice- "You shouldn't be here"- I felt a shiver as that odd thought entered my mind. Now, how strange it must seem that, as an investigator of phenomena beyond the natural, I was so overwhelmed by the account of a frightened maid. But this case was clearly different. Something in the air confirmed that something was amiss, unlike the common case of a missing shoe or ramblings of the ill, of which I had solved many. Such things were the reason for my depression, after all.

After collecting myself, I returned to the living room, where the other two servants I were to speak to had remained in wait. However, they had little to tell me. The other young girl slept in the same room as Rosa, and they had become friends; but although she had heard the same noises from the room as Rosa did, she had thought them unimportant. She hadn't believed Rosa when she spoke of what happened on the third floor, leaving their friendship rather strained at present. The elderly man told me that he had been working there for many years, and was used to the groans and moans that the old house made at night. He didn't understand what all the fuss was about. I finished speaking to them hurriedly, as I had the urge to speak to Mr. Infrei and decide on what course of action to take.

After returning to the dining room, I told Mr. Infrei that I would like to be stationed on the third floor for the night, to experience for myself what phenomena the house had to offer. I also suggested that each family member sleep in a separate room, as far apart as possible, primarily to avoid having the others being caught up unnecessarily. Fortunately this was a simple task due to the high amount of spare rooms the building contained. Mrs. Infrei was reluctant to accept my proposal, instead wanting to remain with Martin, but she could do nothing but accept, downtrodden, when Martin insisted on following my plan. As for myself, I was to remain in the room opposite of Mr. Infrei's, ready to confront whatever may appear during the night. Following the discussion, Infrei thought it prudent to show me where I might find the bathroom and other facilities, and gave me a personal tour of his home. And, after some idle chatter, the family members who were still awake - Mr. and Mrs. Infrei - and I retreated to the third floor and to our rooms.

Upon entering my temporary room, I immediately strode to the windows and opened them widely, unable to handle the feeling of claustrophobia that had been building within me. Contrary to the strange feeling of entrapment I had felt earlier, the outside was easily reached, and the cold air and vicious rain hit me with full force. My fear alleviated, I closed the windows again, bringing stillness back to the dim room.