



# Library podcast

## Thrilling Tales, A Storytime for Grownups presents: “The Ghost Child” by Bernard Capes and “The Furnished Room” by O Henry

[00:00:05] Welcome to the Seattle Public Library’s podcasts of author readings and library events, a series of readings, performances, lectures and discussions. Library podcasts are brought to you by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation to learn more about our programs and podcasts visit our web site at W W W DOT SPL DOT org to learn how you can help the Library Foundation. Support the Seattle Public Library. Go to Foundation DOT SPL DOT org. The podcast you’re about to hear was recorded in 2010.

[[00:00:44] Welcome, everybody, to Thrilling Tales.

[00:00:48] The Storytime for Grownups. Thrilling Tales happens on the first and third Monday of every month. My name is David. I'm a librarian. I work up on the third floor in the fiction department. So if you're ever looking for something good to read, do come and see us. As I said, Thrilling Tales happens the first and third Monday of every month right here in the Central Library, in the auditorium. It's a lunch hour program. Today we have two ghost stories, as befits the season. And these were both published back in 1906. Old fashioned ghost stories. The first of these is a British story by a writer named Bernard Capes.

[00:01:32] And it's called “The Ghost Child”. In making this confession public, I am aware that I am giving a butterfly to be broken on a wheel.

[00:01:45] There is so much of delicacy in its subject that the mere resolve to handle it at all might seem to imply a lack of the sensitiveness necessary to its understanding. And it is certain that the more reverent the touch, the more irresistible will figure its opportunity to the common skepticism, which is bond slave to the five senses.

[00:02:09] On the other hand, to withhold from evidence in these days of what men may call an empirical psychology, anything which may appear elusive. Daughtery, however, exquisitely and rarely of our spiritual relationships must be pronounced, I think, a sin against the Holy Ghost. All in all, therefore, I decide to give with every passage to personal identification safeguarded. The story of a possession or visitation which is signified by the title to my narrative trophy, Anna was the sole orphaned representative of an obscure but gentle family which had lived for generations in the east of England. The spirit of the fans of the long grey marshes, whose shores are the neutral ground of two

elements, slumbered in her eyes. Looking into them, one seemed to see little beds of tiny green mosses, luminous under water, or stirred by the movement of microscopic life in their midst. secrets., one felt, were shadowed in their depths, too frail and sweet for understanding. The pretty love fancy of babies seen in the eyes of maidens wasn't hers to be interpreted into the very cosmic dust of sea urchins sparkling like Crisil barrels. Her soul looked out through them as if they were the windows of a water nursery. She was always a child among children in heart and knowledge. Most innocent until Jason came and stood in her field division. Then spirit of the neutral ground as she was inclined to earth or water with the sway of the tides. She came wondering, and dripping, as it were, to land, and took up her abode for final choice among the daughters of the Earth. She knew her woman's estate, in fact, and the irresistible attraction of all completed perfections to the light that burns to destroy them. tofino was not only an orphan, but an heiress, her considerable estate was administered by her guardian. Jason's father, a widower who was possessed of this single adored child, the fruits of parental infatuation had come early to ripen on the seedling. The boy was self-willed and perverse.

[00:04:41] The more so as he was naturally of a hot hearted disposition, violence and remorse would sway him in alternate moods and be made each in its turn. As self-indulgence, he took a delight in crossing his father's wishes and no less in atoning for his grace looseness with moving demonstrations of affection.

[00:05:03] For most of the old man's most cherished objects was very naturally a union between the two young people he planned maneuvered, spoke for it with all his heart of love and eloquence, and indeed it seemed at last as if his hopes were to be crowned.

[00:05:22] Jason, returning from a lengthy voyage for his enterprising spirited early, decided for the sea and he was a naval officer, saw and was struck amazed before the transformed division of his old child play fellow.

[00:05:38] She was an open flower whom he had left a green bud, things so rare and flawless that it seemed a sacrilege for earthly passions to converse of her familiarity, however, and some sense of reciprocal attraction quickly dethroned that Eucharist. Safina could blush, could thrill, could solicit in the sweet ways of innocent womanhood. She loved him dearly, wholly.

[00:06:09] It was plain had found the realisation of her old, formless dreams in this wondrous birth of a desire for one in whose new, impassioned eyes she had known herself reflected hitherto only for the most patronized of small gossips.

[00:06:25] And for her part, fearless as nature, she made no secret of her love. She was absorbed in a captive to Jason from that moment and forever. He responded. What man, however perverse, could have resisted on first appeal. The attraction of such beauty, the flower of a radiance. So the two were betrothed.

[00:06:48] The old man's cup of happiness was brand. Then came clouds and a cold wind chilling the Garden of Hesperus.

[00:06:59] Jason was always one of those who possessing classic noses will cut them off on easy provocation is to spite their faces. He was so proudly independent to himself that he resented the least assumption of proprietorship in him on the part of other people, even of those who had the best claim to his love and submission. This pride was an obsession. It stultified the real good in him, which was considerable apart from it. He was a good, warm tempered fellow, hasty but affectionate under its dominion. He would have broken his own heart on an imaginary grievance. He found one. It is to be supposed in the privileges assumed by love in its exacting claims upon him, perhaps in its little, unreasoning jealousies.

[00:07:49] He distorted these into an implied conceit of authority over him on the part of an heiress who was condescending to his Minar fortunes. The suggestion was quite base and without warrant. But pride has no balance, no doubt.

[00:08:06] Moreover, the rather childis self depredations of the old man, his father, in his attitude towards a match he had so fondly desired, helped to aggravate this feeling. The upshot was that within a few months of the date, which was to make his union with Trifonov eternal, Jason broke away from a restraint which is pride pictured to him as intolerable, and went on a yachting expedition with a friend.

[00:08:33] Then at once, and with characteristic violence came the reaction he wrote. Impetuously frenziedly from a distant port claming himself. Try Fina's and try Fino his forever and ever and ever. They were man and wife before God. He had behaved like an insensate brute, and he was at that moment starting to speak to her side to beg her forgiveness and the return of her love.

[00:09:01] He had no need to play the suiter afresh. She had never doubted or questioned their mutual bondage and would have died a made for his sake.

[00:09:09] Something of sweet exaltation only seemed to quicken and leap in her body that her faith in her dear love was vindicated.

[00:09:18] But the joy came here to upset the reason of the old man already tottering in its dotage. And what followed destroyed it utterly. The yacht flying home was lost at sea and Jason was drowned.

[00:09:40] I once saw try Faina about this time. She lived with her near mindless charge. Lonely in an old grey house upon the borders of assault meher and had little but the unearthly cries of seabirds to answer to the questions of her widowed heart. She worked sweet in charity among the marsh folk, a beautiful, unearthly presence, and was especially to be found where infants and the troubles of child bearing women called for her help and sympathy. She was a wife herself. She would say quaintly, and someday, perhaps by the grace of the good spirits of the sea, would be a mother.

[00:10:22] Non-thought to cross her statement put with so sweet a sanity. And indeed, I've often noticed that the neighborhood of great waters. breeds in souls of mysticism, which is remote from the very understanding of land dwellers.

[00:10:37] How I saw her was thus I was fishing on a day of chill, calm in a dinghy off the flat coast. The stillness of the morning attempted be some distance from the village where I was staying presently. A sense of bad sport and healthy famine plumped me, so to speak, for luncheon, and I looked about for a spot picturesque enough to add zest to sandwiches, whisky and tobacco. Close by, a little creek or estuary ran up into a mere between rich and the sea lay a cluster of low sand hills and thither. I pulled the spot. When I reached, it was calm, chill, desolation, manifest lifeless water and lifeless sand with no traffic between them. But the dead interchange of salt, low sedges at first, and behind them low woods were mirrored in the water at a distance, with an interval between me and them of sheeted glass. And right across this shining pool ran a dim, half drowned causeway, the sea path it appeared to, and from a lonely house, which I could just distinguish squatting among the trees.

[00:11:48] It was Tri Phoenix House. Now paddling desperately, I turned a cold Doone. And saw a mermaid before me. At least that was my instant impression. The creature sat coiled on a strand, combing her hair that was certain, for I saw the gold green tresses of it whisked by her action into rainbow threads, it appeared as certain that her upper half was flesh and her lower fish.

[00:12:21] It was only on my nearer approach that this latter resolved itself into a pale green skirt, roped owing to her posture about her limbs, and the hem fanned out at her feet into a tail fin. That's also her bosom, which it appeared naked, became a bodice as near to her flesh in color and texture, as a smock is to a lady's smock, which some call a cuckoo flower.

[00:12:48] It was plain enough now. Yet the illusion for the moment had quite startled me. As I came near, she paused in her strange business to canvas me. It was Trifonov herself, as after inquiry informed me.

[00:13:04] I've never seen so lovely a creature. Her eyes, as they regarded me passing, was something to haunt a dream so great in tragedy, not fathomless, but all in motion near their surface, as it seemed with green and rooted sorrows. They were the eyes, I thought of a water nymph late, humanised, late awoken to the rapture as some troubled knowledge of the woman's burden.

[00:13:35] Her forehead was most fair and the glistening facts divided on it like a golden cloud revealing the face of a wandering angel. I passed and a sand heap stole my vision foot by foot.

[00:13:52] The vision was gone when I returned. I have reason to believe it was vouchsafed me within a few months of the coming of the Ghost Child.

[00:14:03] On the morning succeeding, the night of the day on which Jason and Trey Fino were to have been married, the girl came down from her bedroom with an extraordinary expression of still

rapture on her face. After breakfast, she took the old man into her confidence. She was childish, still her manner quite youthfully thrilling. But now there was a new born wonder in it that hovered on the pink of shame.

[00:14:29] Father, I have been under the deep waters and found him.

[00:14:35] He came to me last night in my dreams.

[00:14:39] So sobbing, so impassioned to assure me that he had never really ceased to love me. Though he had near broken his own heart, pretending it. Poor boy, poor ghost. What could I do but take him to my arms and all night he lay there blessed and forgiven.

[00:14:59] Telling the morning he melted away with a sigh that woke me. And it seemed to me that I came up dripping from the sea. My boy. He has come back, chuckled the old man. What have you done with him? Try Faina.

[00:15:17] I will hold him tighter next time. She said.

[00:15:22] But the spirit of Jason visited her dreams. No more. That was in March.

[00:15:30] In the Christmas following, when the mirror was locked in stillness and the one reflection of snow mingled on the ceiling with the red dance of firelight. One morning the old man came hurrying and panting to try FEMA's door.

[00:15:42] Try Finna come down quickly, my boy. My Jason has come back. It is a lie that they told us about his being lost at sea.

[00:15:51] Her heart leapt like a candle flame.

[00:15:54] What new delusion of the old man's was this? She hurried over her dressing and descended a garrulous old voice mingled with a childish treble in the breakfast room.

[00:16:04] Hardly breathing, she turned the handle of the door and saw Jason before her.

[00:16:11] But it was Jason, the prattling babe of her first knowledge. Jason the Fleck's and headed apple cheeked cherub of the nursery. Jason the confiding, the married, the loving before pride had come to warp his innocence.

[00:16:28] She fell on her knees to the child and with a burst of ecstasy, caught him to her heart. She asked no question of the old man as to when or whence this apparition had come or why he was here. Some reason she dared not.

[00:16:46] She accepted him as some waif whom an accidental likeness had made glorious to their hungering hearts. As for the father, he was utterly satisfied and content. He had heard a knock at the door, he said, and had opened it and found this. The child was naked, and his pink wet body glazed with ice. Yet he seemed insensible to the killing. Cold.

[00:17:09] It was Jason. That was enough. There is no date nor time for imbecility. It's phantom spring from the clash of ancient memories.

[00:17:22] This was justice, actually. His child is more so, in fact, than the grown young figure, which for all its manhood had dissolved into the mists of the waters.

[00:17:33] He was more familiar with, more confident of it. After all, it had come back to be unquestioningly dependent on him. And that was like us, the real Jason flesh of his flesh.

[00:17:46] Who are you? Darling said try FEMA. I am Jason and said the child.

[00:17:54] She wept and fondled him rapturously. And who am I? She asked. If you are Jason. You must know what to call me.

[00:18:04] I know, he said. But I mustn't unless you ask me. I won't, she answered with a burst of weeping.

[00:18:14] It is Christmas Day, dearest, when the miracle of the little child was wrought, I will ask you nothing but to stay and bless our desolate home.

[00:18:23] He nodded, laughing. I will stay until you ask me.

[00:18:29] They found some little old robes of the baby Jason put away in lavender and dressed him in them. All day he laughed. And Parafield yes, it was strange that talk as he might. He never once referred to matters familiar to the childhood of the lost sailor.

[00:18:46] In the early afternoon, he asked to be taken out, see words. That was his wish. Try feeding a clothed him warmly and taking his little hand led him away.

[00:18:57] They left the old man sleeping peacefully. He was never to wake again.

[00:19:04] As they crossed the narrow causeway snow FICC and silence began to fall. tofino was not afraid for herself or the child. A rapture upheld her. A sense of some compelling happiness which she knew before long must take shape on her lips. They reached the seaward dunes near ghosts of foothold in that smoke of flakes.

[00:19:27] The lap of vast waters seemed all around them, hollow and mysterious. The sound flooded by Fenice ears, drowning her senses. She cried out and stopped.

[00:19:39] Before they go, she screamed, before they go, tell me what you were to call me. The child sprang a little distance and stood facing her already his lower limbs seemed dissolving in the mists.

[00:19:57] I was to call you mother. He cried with a smile and toss of his hand.

[00:20:05] And even as he spoke his pretty features wavered and vanished.

[00:20:10] The snow broke into him and became part with him where he had been a gleam of iridescent dust seemed to show one moment before it sank and was extinguished in the falling cloud.

[00:20:24] Then there was only the snow keeping in eternal chaos with nothingness. Life in a made this confession on a Christmas Eve night to one who was a believer in dreams. The next morning, she was seen to cross the causeway and thereafter was never seen again. But she left the sweetest memory behind her for human charity and an elf like gift of loveliness.

[00:21:04] Our next story is also from 1986, but we cross over from the old world to the new. And from the British Isles to the Isle of Manhattan. And this story is by O Henry. And it's called "The Furnished Room". Restless shifting for geishas as time itself is a certain vast bulk of the population of the red brick district of the Lower West Side homeless, they have one hundred homes. They flit from furnished room to furnished room, transients forever, transients, an abode, transients in heart and mind. They sing home sweet home in rag time. They carry their household gods in a bandbox. Their vine is entwined about a picture hat. A rubber plant is their fig tree. Hence the houses of this district. Having had a thousand dwellers should have a thousand tales to tell. Mostly dull ones. No doubt. But it would be strange if there could not be found a ghost or two in the wake of all these vagrant guests. One evening after a dark young man prowled among these crumbling red mansions, ringing their bells at the 12th.

[00:22:30] He rested his lean hand baggage upon the step and wiped the dust from his hat band and forehead. The bell sounded faint and far away in some remote, hollow depths. To the door of this, the 12th house whose bell he had rung came a housekeeper who made him think of an unwholesome servitude worm that had eaten its not to a hollow shell and now sought to fill the vacancy with edible lodgers.

[00:22:58] He asked if there was a room to let.

[00:23:01] Come in, said the housekeeper. Her voice came from her throat. Her throat seemed lined with fur. I have the third floor back vacant since a week back. Should you wish to look at it? The young man followed her up the stairs. A faint light from no particular source mitigated the shadows of the holes they trod. Noiselessly upon a stair carpet that its own loom would have forsworn. It seemed to have become vegetable, to have degenerated in that rank. Sunless air to lush lichen or spreading moss that grew in patches to the staircase and was visted under the foot like organic matter. At each turn of the stairs were vacant niches in the wall. Perhaps plants had once been set within them. If so,

they had died in that foul and tainted air. It may be that statues of the saints had stood there, but it was not difficult to conceive that imps and devils had dragged them forth into the darkness and down to the unholy depths of some furnished pit below.

[00:24:09] This is the room, said the housekeeper from her furry throat.

[00:24:13] It's a nice room. It ain't often vacant. I have some most elegant people in it last summer. No trouble at all. And paid in advance to the minute. The water's at the end of the hall at Sprouse. And Mooney kept it three months. They'd done a vaudeville sketch at Miss breton's Sprouse. You may have heard of her a lot. That was just their stage names right there. Over the dresser is where the marriage certificate hung framed. The gas is here. And at what you see, there is plenty of closet room. It's a room everybody likes. It never stays idle long.

[00:24:55] Do you have many theatrical people rooming here?

[00:24:59] Asked the young man that comes and goes. A good proportion of my lodgers is connected with the theaters. Yes, sir. This is the theatrical district. Actor People never stays long anywhere. I get my share. Yes, they comes and they goes.

[00:25:18] He engaged the room paying for a week in advance.

[00:25:23] He was tired, he said, and would take possession at once. He counted out the money. The room had been made ready. She said, even to towels and water as the housekeeper moved away. He put for the thousandth time.

[00:25:36] The question that he carried at the end of his tongue. A young girl, Miss Vasher. Miss Louise Vasher.

[00:25:48] Do you remember such a one among your launders, she would have been singing on the stage. Most likely a fair girl of medium height and slender with reddish gold hair and a dark mole near her left eyebrow.

[00:26:05] No, I don't remember the name them stage people whose names they change as often as their rooms. They comes and they goes, no, I don't call that one to mind.

[00:26:21] No. Always. No.

[00:26:25] Five months of ceaseless interrogation and the inevitable negative, so much time spent by day and questioning managers, agents, schools and choruses by night among the audiences of theaters from all star casts down to music halls solo that he dreaded to find what he most hoped for.

[00:26:47] He had loved her best, had tried to find her. He was sure that since her disappearance from home, this great water girt city held her somewhere, but it was like a monstrous quicksand,



shifting its particles constantly with no foundation, its upper granules of today, buried tomorrow in zoos and slime, the furnished room received its latest guest with a first go of pseudo hospitality, a hectic, haggard, perfunctory welcome.

[00:27:20] Like the specious smile of a low life, the fist sophisticated comfort came in reflected gleams from the decayed furniture, the ragged brocade upholstery of a couch and two chairs, a foot wide, cheap pier glass between the two windows from one or two gilt picture frames and a brass bedstead in a corner.

[00:27:41] The guest reclined inert upon a chair, while the room confused didn't speech as though it were an apartment in Babel, tried to discourse to him of its diverse tenant tree. A poly chromatic rug like some brilliant flowered rectangular tropical eyelet lace surrounded by a billowy sea of soiled matting upon the gay papered wall where those pictures that pursue the homeless one from house to house. The Huguenot lovers. The First Quarrel. The Wedding Breakfast psyche at the Fountain. The Mantels chastely sivr outline was in gloriously veiled behind some pert drapery drawn rakishly askew like the sashes of the Amazonian ballet upon it, with some desolate flotsam cast aside by the rooms marooned when a lucky sail had borne them to a fresh port, a trifling vase, or two pictures of actresses, a medicine bottle, some stray cards out of a deck. One by one, as the characters of a cryptic graph become explicit, the little signs left by the furnished rooms procession of guests developed a significance. The threadbare space in the rug in front of the dresser told the lovely women had marched in the throng. Tiny fingerprints on the wall spoke of little prisoners trying to feel their way to sun and air spattered, stained, raying like a shadow of a bursting bomb witnessed where a hurled glass or bottle had splintered with its contents against the wall across the pier. Glass had been scrawled with a diamond in staggering letters. The name Mary.

[00:29:29] It seemed like the succession of dwellers in the furnished room had turned in fury. Perhaps tempted beyond forbearance by its garish coldness and wreaked upon it their passions. The furniture was chipped and bruised. The couch, distorted by bursting springs, seemed a horrible monster that had been slain during the stress of some grotesque convulsion.

[00:29:54] Some more potent upheaval had cloven a great slice from the marble mantel, each plank of the floor owned its particular cant and shriek as from a separate and individual agony.

[00:30:06] It seemed incredible that all this malice and injury had been rocked upon the room by those who had called it for a time their home. And yet it may have been the cheated home instinct surviving blindly, the resentful rage at false household gods that had kindled their wrath.

[00:30:25] A hut that is our own. We can sweep and adorn and cherish.

[00:30:32] The young tenant in the chair allowed these thoughts to file soft shod through his mind while they drifted into the room.

[00:30:39] Furnished sounds and furnished. Since he heard in one room a tittering and incontinent slack laughter. In others, the monologue of a scold, the rattling of dice, a lullaby and one crying dully. Above him, a banjo tinkled with spirit. Doors banged somewhere, the elevated trains roared intermittently. A cat growled miserably upon a back fence.

[00:31:12] And he breathed the breath of the house, a dank savor rather than a smell, a cold, musty, it flew Veum as from underground vaults mingled with the leaking exhalations of linoleum and mildewed and rotten woodwork.

[00:31:31] And then suddenly, as he rested there, the room was filled with a strong, sweet odor of mignonette.

[00:31:43] It came as upon a single buffet of wind with such sureness of fragrance and emphasis that it almost seemed a living visited, and the man cried aloud, What, dear? As if he had been cold and sprang up and faced about the rich odor, clung to him and wrapped him around. He reached out his arms for it, all his senses for the time, confused and co-mingled. How could one be peremptorily cold by an odor? Surely it must have been a sound, but was it not the sound that had touched that had caressed him? She has been in this room.

[00:32:29] He cried and he sprang to rest from it. A token, for he knew he would recognize the smallest thing that had belonged to her, or that she had touched the enveloping scent of mignonette. The odor that she had loved and made her own.

[00:32:45] Whence came it?

[00:32:48] The room had been but carelessly set in order, scattered upon the flimsy dresser scarf for a half a dozen hairpins, those discreet, indistinguishable friends of women kind. Feminine of gender. Infinitive mood and uncommunicative of tense. These hairpins he ignored. Conscious of their triumphant black of identity, ransacking the drawers of the dresser, he came upon a discarded, tiny, ragged handkerchief. He pressed it to his face.

[00:33:19] It was racy and insolent. With heliotrope. He hurled it to the floor in another drawer. He found odd buttons. A theater program upon brokers' card. Two lost marshmallows. A book on the divination of dreams. In the last was a woman's black satin hair bow, which halted him poised between ice and fire. But the Black Satin Haribo also is feminine, it--is demure, impersonal, common ornament and tells no tales. And then he traverse the room like a hound on the scent, skimming the walls, considering the corners of the bulging matting on his hands and knees, rummaging mantel and tables, the curtains and hangings that drunken cabinet in the corner for a visible sign, unable to perceive that she was there beside around against, with an above him clinging to him, wooing him, calling him so poignantly through the finer senses that even his grosser ones became cognizant of the call.

[00:34:32] Once again, he answered loudly, yes, dear, and turned wild eyed to gaze on vacancy, for he could not yet discern form and color and love and outstretched arms in the odor of mignonette oh, got winds that older.

[00:34:55] And since when have odours had a voice to call?

[00:34:59] Thus, he groped.

[00:35:02] He burrowed in crevices and corners, found corks and cigarettes. These he passed in passive contempt. But once he found in a fold of the matting a half smoked cigar in this he ground beneath his heel with a green and trenchant oath. He shifted the room from end to end.

[00:35:20] He found dreary and IgNobel small records of many a peripatetic tenant, but of her whom he sought and who may have lodged there, and whose spirit seemed to hover there.

[00:35:36] He found no trace. And then he thought of the housekeeper.

[00:35:42] He ran from the haunted room downstairs and to a door that showed a crack of light. She came out to his knock. He smothered his excitement as best he could. Will you tell me, madam? He besought her. Who occupied the room? I have. Before I came.

[00:36:01] Yes, sir, I can tell you again towards Sprouse and Mooney, as I said, that Miss Berretta Sprouse was in the theaters. Miss Mooney. She was. My house is well known for respectability. The marriage certificate hung framed on a nail above. What kind of lady was Miss Sprouse? I mean, in looks, I mean. Oh, why, a black haired sir and short stout with a comical face. They left a week ago Tuesday. And before they occupied it, there was a single gentleman connected with the draping business. He left owing me a week and before him was Mrs. Crowder and her two children. They stayed for months. In back of them was old Mr. Doyle, whose sons paid for him. He kept the room six months in a while. That goes back a year, sir. And further. I don't remember.

[00:37:09] He thanked her and crept back to his room. The room was dead. The essence that had vilified it was gone.

[00:37:19] The perfume of Mignonette had departed in its place with the old stale odor of moldy house furniture and an atmosphere in storage.

[00:37:31] The ebbing of his hope drained his faith.

[00:37:35] He sat staring at the yellow singing gaslight.

[00:37:40] Soon he walked to the bed and began to tear the sheets into strips.

[00:37:47] With the blade of his knife, he drove them tightly into every crevice around the windows and door.

[00:37:54] When all was snug and taut, he turned out the light turned the gas full on again. And laid himself gratefully upon the bed.

[00:38:08] It was Mrs. McCool's night to go with the can for beer. So she fetched it and sat with Mrs. Purdy in one of those subterranean retreats where housekeepers for Gather and the worm die off. Seldom.

[00:38:23] I rented out my third floor back this evening, said Mrs. Purdy across a fine circle of foam. A young man took it. He went up to bed two hours ago. Now, did you, Mrs. Purdy, ma'am? Said Mrs. Makhoul, with intense admiration.

[00:38:40] You do be a wonder for renting rooms of that kind. And did you tell him?

[00:38:46] Then she concluded, in a husky whisper, laden with mystery.

[00:38:52] Rooms, said Mrs. Purdy in her furious tones, are furnished to rent. I did not tell him, Mrs. Makhoul. Well, she's right. Charm. Tease by renting rooms we keep alive. You have a real sense of business, ma'am. There'll be many people will reject the rent of a room if they be towed. A suicide has been after dying in the bed of it.

[00:39:18] As you say, we has. I live in to be making, remarked Mrs. Purdy.

[00:39:24] Yes, ma'am. Tis true. He's just one week ago this day. I helped you lay out the third floor back. A pretty slip of a colleague. And she was to be killin herself with the gas as sweet as her face. She had Miss Perigee, ma'am. She had been called handsome, as you say, said Mrs. Purdy, assenting but critical. But for that mole, she had grown by a left eyebrow.

[00:39:53] Do fill up your glass again. Mrs. Makhoul. v.n.

[00:40:03] Thank you for coming to thrilling tales. We will have another story right here in one week.

[00:40:11] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.