THE WHISTLE

Burnstow is a small seaside town. It is a busy town in summer. But it is a quiet place for the rest of the year. In spring and autumn, only a few people go there. They go to Burnstow to play golf.

Professor Parkins went to Burnstow in the spring of 1902. He stayed at a small inn called The Globe. The Globe Inn was very near the sea.

There were only two rooms for guests at the inn. There was a guest in one of the rooms so the Professor had to stay in the other. The landlord took the Professor upstairs to the room.

The landlord unlocked the door and showed the Professor the room.

This is the room, sir,' he said. 'There are two beds. Both of them are comfortable. You can choose the bed you want. There's a good view of the sea from the window.'

Professor Parkins looked out of the window. The beach was only a hundred yards away. The sea looked grey and cold. Then the Professor noticed that there were no curtains on the window.

'Landlord,' he said. 'There are no curtains on the window.'

'I'm very sorry, sir,' said the landlord. 'I'll tell the servant to put them up.'

That afternoon, Professor Parkins met the other guest. His name was Colonel Wilson. They decided to play golf together.

The two men walked along the road to the golf-course. They talked about their lives and their work. Colonel Wilson had been an army officer in India. He had lived in
India for many years.
'I am an archeologist,' said Professor Parkins. 'I study history by digging up old buildings.'
'Are there any old buildings here in Burnstow?' asked the Colonel.
'I believe there was an old church near the golf-course,' said the Professor. 'But it was pulled down in the fourteenth century.'
'Why?' asked the Colonel. 'It's unusual to pull down a church, isn't it?'
'Yes,' said the Professor. 'I don't know why it was pulled down. That's why I want to look for it. I want to find the place where the church stood.'
They played golf for most of the afternoon.
'Shall we go back to the inn for a drink before supper?' the Colonel asked.
'I will see you at the inn in half an hour,' the Professor said. 'First, I will look for the old church.'
'Don't be late,' said the Colonel. 'It will be dark soon.'
The Colonel walked along the road towards the inn. The Professor walked towards the beach. He looked at the ground carefully.
There were many large, grey stones near the beach. The stones were covered with grass. They were placed in the shape of a circle.
The Professor touched a stone with his foot. The stone moved. There was a hole underneath the stone.
Professor Parkins looked into the hole. It was dark in the hole and he could not see anything. So he lit a match. The wind blew the match out.
He put his hand into the hole. The hole was empty.
No — he was wrong. His fingers touched something made
of metal. He pulled it out of the hole. It was a piece of metal about four inches long. It was old and dirty. He put it in his pocket.

The wind from the sea was cold and the sky was cloudy. It was getting dark. Professor Parkins decided to walk back to the inn.

It was a short walk along the beach to the inn, but there were high breakwaters on the beach. The Professor climbed over each of the breakwaters slowly. It was hard work. He stopped to rest.

He looked back and saw someone about a hundred yards behind him. The other person stopped. It was getting dark, so the Professor could not see clearly. He could not see what the other person looked like. A black figure on the beach was watching him. Was it a man or a woman? Or was it something else?

The Professor suddenly felt afraid. He did not want to meet this strange figure on the dark beach. He thought that the figure was following him. He started to run, but the sand was soft and deep and the breakwaters were high. He felt he was running in a dream.

At last he reached the inn. He looked round. There was no one behind him on the dark beach. He was cold and tired and very glad to go into the warm inn.

The Colonel was waiting for him. They ate supper together and talked about golf. Then the Professor went upstairs to his room.

As he took off his jacket, he remembered the piece of metal in his pocket. He took it out and looked at it by candlelight. It was a very old whistle.

He tried to blow the whistle. No noise came out. The whistle was full of dirt.
The Professor took out a small pocket-knife. He went to the window to clean the dirt out of the whistle.

He saw that there were still no curtains on the window. He opened the window and looked out. The night was dark. There was no moon. But the Professor thought there was someone standing on the beach.

He cleaned the whistle quickly then went back to the candle. Now he could see marks on the whistle. The marks were letters - QUIS EST ISTE QUI VENIT.

Latin! the Professor thought. "Quis est iste qui venit" means - "Who is this who is coming?"

The Professor tried to blow the whistle.

No one will come, he thought. But he put the whistle to his lips and blew.

The sound of the whistle was clear and high. It was a sad sound. Suddenly the wind blew strongly through the open window. The candle went out. The Professor was surprised and frightened. He stood in the dark listening to the wind.

He walked slowly across the room. He closed the window. Still the wind blew. It blew around the inn making a terrible noise.

The Professor relit the candle with a match. He felt tired and cold. He put the whistle on a table and undressed. Then he got into one of the beds and blew out the candle. When he closed his eyes, he dreamt he was on the beach. He saw the high breakwaters. It was dark but he saw everything clearly.

He saw someone running. Every few seconds, the man looked behind him. The man was frightened and tired. He climbed over each breakwater more slowly. Finally, he fell on the sand and lay still. He had a look of terror on his face.

Behind the man, someone or something was moving very
quickly. It came nearer and nearer. It was a strange black figure. It came closer and closer to the man who lay on the beach. It stopped. And then it jumped straight towards the man.

Professor Parkins opened his eyes. He was too afraid to see what happened next. Every time he closed his eyes, he had the same dream.

At last, he reached for his matches and lit the candle. Something moved on the floor under his bed. He thought it was a mouse.

The Professor was not able to sleep again. When morning
came, he went downstairs for breakfast.
  'You don't look well,' the Colonel said. 'A game of golf will make you feel better.'
  'Yes,' said the Professor. 'I need some fresh air.'
  After breakfast, the Professor went upstairs to get his hat.
The servant was cleaning his room.
  'Good morning, sir,' the girl said. 'It was cold and windy last night. Would you like another blanket for your bed?'
  'Yes, please,' said the Professor.
  'Which bed shall I put it on, sir?' asked the girl.
  'The one I slept in,' said the Professor.
  'But you slept in both beds, sir,' said the girl. 'I put clean sheets on both beds.'
  'Did I?' said the Professor. 'Put a blanket on the bed in the corner.'
As soon as the girl had finished, the Professor left the room. He locked the door and put the key in his pocket.
  He met the Colonel downstairs. They walked along the road to the golf-course.
  'It was very windy last night,' said the Colonel. 'When there was a bad storm in India, we said that someone had whistled for the wind.'
  'Well,' said the Professor slowly. 'I blew a whistle last night and the wind came soon afterwards.'
  'How very strange,' said the Colonel. 'Tell me, what kind of whistle was it?'
The Professor told the Colonel about the whis. He told him how he had found it. He told him that he had cleaned it and blown it. He did not tell him that he had stayed awake all night. The Colonel listened to the story but said nothing. They played golf until late in the afternoon.
They walked back along the road to the inn. The Professor did not want to walk back along the beach. They were very near the inn when a boy came running towards them. He ran straight into the Colonel and fell over.

'What's the matter?' the Colonel asked angrily. 'Look where you're going!'

The boy was very frightened. The Colonel spoke to him again, 'Who are you running away from?'

'The thing in the window,' the boy answered. He was crying.

'What thing?' the Colonel asked. 'Come and show us.' The boy took them to the front of The Globe Inn. He pointed up to a window.

'It was up there, sir,' he said. 'It was waving at me. But it was a horrible thing, sir. I don't think it was alive!'

'Don't be afraid,' the Colonel said. 'It was someone trying to frighten you. Go home and forget about it.'

The Colonel looked at the Professor. That's the window of your room isn't it?' he asked.

'Yes,' said the Professor. 'There's something strange going on. Will you come upstairs with me?'

The two men went upstairs together. The Professor's room was locked. He opened the door with his key. Inside the room, one of the beds was untidy. A sheet lay on the floor by the window. The Professor called the servant.

'Who has been in my room?' asked the Professor.

'No one, sir,' the servant replied. 'There are only two keys to this room. You have one and the landlord has the other.'

The Professor went to find the landlord.
'I didn't go into your room while you were out, sir,' said the landlord.

The Professor and the Colonel ate supper together. 'I can't understand it,' said the Professor. 'How can someone have gone into a locked room?'

'Show me the whistle you told me about,' said the Colonel.

The Professor showed it to him. 'What will you do with it?' asked the Colonel. 'I shall put it in a museum,' said the Professor. 'Throw it into the sea,' said the Colonel. 'I'm going to bed. Call me if you need me in the night.'

Professor Parkins went to his room. The night was clear and the moon was full. Bright moonlight shone through the window. There were still no curtains. The Professor was angry.

The moonlight will shine through the window and keep me awake, he thought. He decided to hang a sheet over the window. He took a sheet from the empty bed and hung it on the curtain rail. Then he got into his own bed and went to sleep.

He did not sleep for long. Bright moonlight woke him up. The sheet was no longer over the window. A noise came from the empty bed. The Professor looked across the room. Suddenly a figure sat up on the other bed. The Professor was so surprised- that he jumped out of his own bed. He stood by the window. There was moonlight, but he could not see the figure on the other bed clearly. It was covered with a sheet.

The figure stood up. It stood between the Professor and the door. Its arms were spread out. It was searching for the Professor with its fingers!
The figure jumped on the Professor’s empty bed. It moved slowly over the pillow. The Professor shivered with fear.

Then the figure got off the bed and moved towards the window. In the bright moonlight, the Professor could see its face under the sheet. It was very old and very horrible.

The Professor opened the window and yelled for help. The figure under the sheet jumped forward. Its hands went over the Professor's mouth.

The Professor tried to get away. He was about to fall out of the window when a hand pulled him back. It was the Colonel. There was no one else in the room. A sheet from the bed lay on the floor by the window.

Next morning, the Colonel and the Professor went down to the beach. The Colonel took the strange whistle and threw it into the sea.

'Things like this sometimes happen in India,' the Colonel said. 'I don't think the figure can hurt you. It can only frighten you.'

Professor Parkins is still afraid of curtains that move in the wind. He also sleeps without sheets on his bed.