

The Unusual House

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The house was unusual to say the least. It was different from all the other houses in the rather suburban street. Looking back, nobody could remember quite when it had been built or by whom. One day, there was a patch of bristly grass and then there was not. As if by magic, a house stood on the shrubby land and everyone went about their business as if houses made of sweets were a perfectly normal phenomenon.

Sometimes, on the way to school, if you quickly glanced, you would catch a glimpse of curtains twitching. It was impossible to tell who was watching although a human-like shadow would occasionally stretch across the window pane. Children would dare each other to dart through the gate and snatch a sweet from the walls of the house. It was a brave child who accepted the dare though. Timothy Winters, a little tousled haired boy, had not been seen for quite some while. Parents laughed and said he had moved to Dorset. But the children knew better!

Anyone who was peeping through their bedroom curtains just the other night would have seen a strange occurrence. The wind, which had been playing along the pavements, suddenly rose and wrapped itself around the branches of the trees. Leaves shivered, trembled and curled up at the edges. Twigs rattled and rasped and turned the other way.

And then ... it was quiet. Silent. Soundless.

The front door of the house of sweets creaked open, a face pale as parchment appeared and black beady eyes scanned the road. A warty old hag emerged. Her skin was gnarled like ancient tree bark, with skinny bones for fingers and twisted hair straggling down her back. Tilting her head to listen for danger (for witches, if that is what she was, can hear a whisper from miles away) she silently watched before flitting into the darkness. All that remained was the wisp of a whine and the suspicion of a screech.

The next morning, the birds awoke, flowers unfurled their petals and the sun cast its beams onto the jewelled grass. Children, as they walked to school, quickly glanced and wondered where the house made of sweets had gone. But, for the most part, everyone went about their business as if disappearing houses were a perfectly normal phenomenon.

Writer's note: The story was written for a Year 4 class