

CC01: Caroline

WHISTLING WIND BEGINS

DOOR CREAKS OPEN

FOOTSTEPS, FLOORBOARDS CREAK

TAPE IS INSERTED INTO A PLAYER, BEGINS TO PLAY

MISS TENOR: They say that Arborwood Grove is haunted. It's the oldest building in town. They say it's actually older than the town. That the house was here first, and the people came later. They say Charles Carr built it for a household of twelve, but when the other eleven never showed up he built a town around it, in the hopes of one day filling the space where his family was supposed to be. Some say he never did, but that's not true.

All you have to do is check the old town records and photographs. Carr remarried in 1896 to a woman named Georgina Jeffreys. They had two daughters, Caroline and Martha. He and his new family and a small household staff lived there for twenty-five years.

And then they left. Nobody knows why. They say there was a fire in 1915. Or 1907. Or 1923. It didn't destroy the house, and the family kept living there, but they say those post-fire years were cursed. They say all the property Charles Carr owned started losing value. They say Mrs. Carr started discovering her husband's many affairs. They say the family started suffering, along with the rest of America, at the hands of the Great Depression. They say that the maids and the cook were fired. They also say that the maids and the cook quit.

They also say that the maids and the cook mysteriously vanished one cold winter night, never to be seen again. They

say one of the daughters went insane. Nobody says which one. I don't think anybody knows.

They say that the curse still lingers to this day, a century after the Carrs decided enough was enough and moved up to Yukon. They say a descendant of Charles Carr still lives up there. Doing everything they can to keep possession of Arborwood Grove. Doing everything they can to make sure they never, ever, have to come here.

And then, after all that, sometimes they say the curse isn't a curse at all. They say that, in the end, only eleven people wound up ever living at Arborwood Grove. They say that someone really did die in that fire, and that their spirit was trapped there, not allowed to leave until someone else came to fill the twelfth spot.

FLOORBOARDS CREAK

MISS TENOR: They say that if you sit very, very still, on this couch right here, and stare at the spot above the mantle that no longer holds a painting, the ghost of Arborwood Grove will be with you. They say that the ghost of Arborwood Grove will be with you for the rest of your life. They say that the ghost of Arborwood Grove will be there when you die. That it will steal your soul as it exits your body and use it to fill the empty space that it'd been trapped in since the days of Charles Carr. They say that if you sit with the ghost of Arborwood Grove, you are doomed to one day take its place. But, then again. They say a lot of things.

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

CREDITS: File CC, track one. Caroline.

BELLS CHIME

BACKGROUND MUSIC BEGINS

MISS TENOR: Well, even if I didn't discover the ghost of Arborwood Grove, at least I'm getting something out of this whole ordeal.

FLOORBOARDS CREAK

MISS TENOR: Holy shit, am I really the first person to find this? Sorry, voice recorder, but this is something that needs a visual.

FAINT SHUFFLING

FLOORBOARDS CREAK AND CRACK

MISS TENOR: Seriously? How is my phone dead, I've barely used it all ni-

SHE SCREAMS

FLOORBOARDS CRACK LOUDLY

MUSIC CUTS OUT

FAINT BACKGROUND STATIC, WIND WHISTLES

CAROLINE: Hello? Are you- Are you still here? Miss Tenor? Amanda? Hm. I go upstairs for the briefest of reprieves, and you suddenly decide to go home? Pity. I was liking your stories.

Oh, what's this? Some kind of...

(She gasps)

RECORDER HITS THE FLOOR

MUSIC FADES IN

CAROLINE: Heavens! Did I just-

(Sharp intake of breath)

RECORDER IS PICKED UP AGAIN

CAROLINE: Yes, I- Um. Goodness. Wow.

(Laughs nervously)

Hello, hello. This is Caroline Carr, reporting live from my sitting room.

Oh, dear lord, can this thing hear me? Is that even possible? Is- Is there someone listening? I don't know how these things generally work, I've never- Ugh. If you can hear me, this is Caroline Carr.

HOUSE SETTLES

CAROLINE: No, not that Caroline Carr. The other one. If you're there, please say something.

MUSIC FADES OUT

CAROLINE: Anything?

Anyone?

No, I suppose that was too much to ask for. One miracle per century, right? I'll have to wait a while until I can get to the next one.

RECORDER CLICKS AS IT MOVES

MUSIC FADES IN

CAROLINE: This is nice. Holding something. Having something to talk to. I generally just talk anyway, especially when people come over, but it feels more... real? To talk to something that can actually hear me. Even if it can't talk back. Just the fact that I can hold it... It's impossible. I haven't held anything since I died. Why can I hold this? What's changed? What's different?

(Gasps softly)

Can I push the buttons?

RECORDER CLICKS OFF, WIND CUTS OUT

INTERLUDE MUSIC

RECORDER CLICKS ON

RAIN IN BACKGROUND

CAROLINE: Is that it? Did I get it? The little orange light is on again, I don't know what that means, but I think it's good? Hello? Oh, I wish I knew how to use these things! I'll leave it for now, just keep talking. Talking and talking with a voice that no one can hear except for me.

(Sighs in frustration)

And what I'm hearing is just a voice inside my head! I haven't heard my real voice for a hundred and twelve Halloweens. That's how long it's been. Just me and my imaginary voice, which probably doesn't even sound anything like what I really sound like. Sounded like. I don't remember what I sounded like.

If I can figure out how to play back recordings on this thing, and it turns out it really has been hearing me, would it have heard the real voice I once had, or the one that's nothing more than a stream of thoughts I imagine projecting out into the world? Living beings only hear silence when they're near me. But machines aren't-

Well, I don't think they're living. I'm not entirely certain. But this one seems inanimate enough. Does our shared lack of life create a connection between us? Does that little orange light signify that I'm being heard? Or did I just press the wrong button, and break the only connection I've ever had to the-

What is this place? The living world? The physical world? The real world? I'm certainly not living or physical, but I believe myself to be real, even if I've never been able to pick up anything other than this little box.

SHE PASSES THE RECORDER FROM HAND TO HAND

CAROLINE: I've always wondered about that. Why I can't pick anything up. I can't sit on the couch. Or open a window. Or sweep away the leaves from the upstairs necessary. But I stand. On the floor. I don't fall through it like I do furniture. And I don't float, or walk through walls. I have to use the stairs and the doorways. If the doors are closed, I can walk right through the doors, but not the walls.

Why can't I go into the walls? And it's not like I can put my hand out and touch the wall. The wall itself isn't keeping me away, there's... Something else. It's hard to explain. Same with the floor. I don't have a physical body, but I still have a sense of where my body might be. I can imagine moving an arm, a leg. I did pick this recorder up, after all. I must be holding it in something. See, I can imagine stomping my foot. I can feel my foot lift, feel it fall. I can feel it stop. But it doesn't feel like it's really hitting the floor. Listen.

SILENCE

CAROLINE: There, I just stomped my foot. Did you hear it? No, of course not. It didn't make a sound. It never does. I haven't made a sound since I died. Until now, that is. So something is changing. Maybe after being a ghost this long, I've started developing... abilities.

MUSIC FADES IN

CAROLINE: No, still can't fly. But maybe other things. Maybe I can pick things up now. Interact with the physical objects that don't seem to exist on the same plane of reality as I do. The tables,

the chairs, the lamps. The beds. The couches and windows.
The doors.

RECORDER IS SET DOWN

CAROLINE: Um, I'm going to leave this here. I'll be back.

RECORDER CLICKS OFF, RAIN STOPS

INTERLUDE MUSIC

RECORDER CLICKS ON

BIRDS SINGING IN BACKGROUND

CAROLINE: The bad news is that I cannot touch the doors. Or the couch.
Or the windows. Or the tables, or the chairs, the lamps, the
beds, the cupboards, the clocks, the banisters, the shelves,
the blankets, the cushions, the toys, the dust. I can't
even touch the dust.

MUSIC FADES IN

CAROLINE: I went around the whole house. All three floors. I reached out
to every object, every piece of furniture, every decorative
ledge etched into the walls. I went to places that I haven't
gone since I was alive.

WIND PICKS UP

CAROLINE: The dumbwaiter that goes from the kitchen up to the dining
room. The little hallway in the cellar that leads to a pair of thin
wooden doors set into the ground outside. The only doors
in the house that I can't walk through. That's where the living
come in, when they come. I'm sure someone could force
open one of the other doors if they really tried, but so far, no
one has. They all come in through the cellar doors and
carefully creep through the darkness until they reach the

stairs. Then they climb up into my house. Into all the rooms that I still can't touch.

I've come up to my favourite room now. The necessary with a broken window. Um, sorry. Washroom. You call them washrooms now. Or bathrooms, sometimes. There's no bath in here. Not much of anything, any more. Just leaves. The floor in this room is covered with the leaves of more autumns than most people would be alive for. I like sitting in among them. I go right through, so I'm sitting on the tiles themselves, sunk into two inches of rotting leaves that don't even know I'm here. It's nice. It's the only room in the house where I can feel time passing. Or at least, where I can remember the feeling of it.

Until today, that is. I went into all the bedrooms up here, even Martha's. I was so desperate, I rooted around in it for something that I might be able to touch. I went right through the bed, the wardrobe, the dresser. Even the floppy giraffe doll she used to play with. I forget what she called it. Lady Something. I didn't know it was still here, until you found it. I wonder why she didn't take it with her.

It's rather strange that it took this long for someone to find the giraffe. When people visit, they tend to gravitate towards my sister's room. Something about it feels... haunted, despite the fact that I rarely go in there. But because it feels haunted, and was clearly once occupied by a young girl, everyone seems to think it's my room. But it's not. It's not my room. Nowadays, my room is the one with a floor covered in leaves. I don't need to sleep, so sometimes I just come in here, and pretend I can feel the time pass. I always like knowing that I'm sitting in decay that's as old as I am dead. I always like knowing that it's around me, even if I can't feel it. But now... The rot, the death. The time. There's a lot of it, you know. And more of it flies in through the window every autumn.

But the good news? The good news is the little orange light turned back on. Thank you. Thank you for turning back on.

Thank you for being real. Thank you for listening, Miss Tenor and the people who read her blog. Whatever a blog is. I imagine it's something like a newspaper, but... smaller?

MUSIC GROWS LOUDER

CAROLINE: I'll give you your device back when you come for it. It's not like I'll be able to stop you. And anyway, I think I'd like it if... If someone heard me. If someone knew I was here. Because that's the thing. You all know I'm here. This whole town. You tell stories about this house, about me. Miss Tenor, you sat in my sitting room just a short while ago, telling every story you'd ever heard in the hopes that one of them might be true. That it might draw me out. That I might hear you. But you didn't need to tell the truth for me to hear you. Nothing you said was true. Nothing you said was true, and I heard you anyway. I was there the whole time. I was listening. It's not my fault you couldn't see me.

Miss Tenor, I'm going to give you the truth. It'll come in a roundabout way, I'm sure, and I might not even get around to it by the time you come back to get your recorder. But what stood out to me about you, what's always stood out since your Grove Night, is that you don't care about whether or not I'm actually here. You're not trying to prove that you're right or that someone else is wrong. You simply wanted to know. One way or the other. My existence is a yes-or-no question, and you're only looking for the answer. And I can give you that. I can give you more than that. I can give you the only true ghost story you've ever heard.

Just... not right now. I'll think about it. But before I do that, I... I'll give you the first answer. The one you came here for. And that answer is "yes". Yes, Miss Tenor. I am real. I am here. And I'll be here until you get back.

MUSIC ENDS

RECORDER CLICKS OFF

CREDITS MUSIC BEGINS

CREDITS: *They Say a Lot of Things* is written by Shannon Smyth and produced by Vienna Munck. Original music by Nathanael Kumar. This episode featured Max Kittleson as Caroline, and Meaghan Cassidy as Miss Tenor. For more information on the show, as well as transcripts and full credits, visit our website or check us out on tumblr. Links are in the description. If you're enjoying the show, please rate and review us on your favourite podcast provider, and tell your friends about us so they can enjoy the show, too. Now, think of a colour. Any colour. It doesn't have to be your favourite. It probably shouldn't be your least favourite. And tell us what it is. Thanks for listening, and until next time, happy haunting.

MUSIC FADES OUT