

House on the Hill

Bob2300

The house on the hill was an old, well built property. The word that came to mind first was large, two floors and an attic with an impressive floor space. The next word was solid when you saw the thick stone walls. Other words came to mind such as foreboding when you saw the iron gates and grills.

Some previous owner had fortified the place. Large reinforced oak and iron doors front and back, so well fitted a razor blade could not get between them. Thick external bars stood on all the downstairs and upstairs windows. The place was like a prison.

Isolated was another word that sprang to mind. The high, solid wall with the heavy iron gates, unkempt hedges around them and untamed forest around that. It had a large parcel of land around it and a reputation.

Anna Starling was twenty two, she had purchased the house in an auction it was going for a song, so very cheap especially for the size of the property and the acreage. She did not think about the lack of competition in purchasing the place-all she thought about was how much money she would make after she had done up and sold it. She was given an ancient iron key ring with four keys. There was a giant key for the front gate, two smaller keys for the front and back doors and one she could not identify; "That's strange. I suppose something will turn up." She mused to herself.

Anna had a suitcase, her laptop and a backpack with her. She would spend a day or two at the place, looking it over and seeing how she was going to spend the minimum amount of money to do it up before the place was up to modern levels of comfort.

Looking at the place she knew she had start at the ground. It needed a new fuse-board and a new boiler. Then it needed a new bathroom. Maybe she could convert a side room on the second floor into a new bath room? She considered it. The place would definitely need a new kitchen! She decided it was getting late so she unrolled her sleeping mat and got out her bed-roll.

Anna stripped to her socks and blue underwear and climbed into her sleeping bag;

"Time to get a good night's sleep and dream of all the money I am going to make!" She yawned. It took a little twisting and turning but she slowly dozed-off and started to dream...

She was at the front gate to the house and she looked down. Anna saw she was wearing old-fashioned clothes. She stepped forward and the gate opened. Looking about the drive she saw it was well-kept not a weed in sight, she stepped forwards.

The path up to the house was clean, spotless. She stepped on one of the stones and it seemed to shift. Anna looked-down it was strange; she was wearing old fashioned shoes too.

The dream continued. Anna found herself at the front door. It opened as she touched it. She walked into the hallway. The house was new, clean yet lived-in and furnished in an old style.

After a pause she grasped the banister and headed up to the first floor. Anna went through a side room and over to a door that she knew hid a second set of stairs. The door to the loft opened, the stairs were narrower.

She went up them. The loft was filled with rubbish, antique boxes and files. Anna swore someone called a name, Jasmine she thought. She crossed over the attic to the far wall. Anna saw in her hand the key ring she had and the key she could not identify but they were shiny and new. The

House on the Hill

key fitted in a small hole then Anna grasped a cleverly disguised handle. She pulled and a door opened to a secret room.

Anna woke up with a start;

"What the heck was that? I haven't smoked pot since college!" She exclaimed. She tried to get up but something was wrong. Her sleeping bag seemed to be way too tight "Damn it! Did I roll over on something?"

Anna tried to move her arms but they were held tightly to her sides by the bag. She tried to move her legs but they were tightly held together. Anna looked at the sleeping bag. The zip was gone. It was one continual piece of fabric! She screamed for help;

"Whoever you are it's not funny! Let me out now or I swear I'll kick your ass!"

Anna saw movement out of the corner of her eye. A heavy coil of rope was slithering across the floor. Anna panicked and struggled;

"This can't be happening, **No!**" It was futile and the rope coiled itself around her ankles over the top of the sleeping bag. Anna struggled and screamed, "God help me! Please let me go!" Swiftly, the rope worked its way up her body up to her knees, her waist then crushingly binding her arms to her sides.

Anna's screams were cut off as the rope cleaved between her jaws, "Helmm mmm mm mph!" She could barely move, it was so tight and the rope was getting tighter. Feebly she struggled against it, she couldn't breathe!

Anna woke up properly, jumping out of her skin, "What the hell was that?" She mused. Her face and hair were covered with sweat. Her trembling hands found the zip to the sleeping bag and she pulled herself out of it.

She balled it up and threw it against a wall, "What the hell **was** that?" She reiterated at the sleeping bag. She sat there on the bed-roll shaking. She hugged her knees taking deep breaths to calm herself down.

Anna pulled her jeans, tee shirt and trainers on, "It's crazy but I have to check..."

She found the old bunch of keys. Young Miss Starling was curious and she walked up to the door of the attic. With trepidation, she opened the door and nervously walked up the stairs one creak at a time. In the dusty attic, she paced it out. The room was definitely too small!

"Damn it! There is something going on-creepy!" Anna searched on the far wall, there was a carefully disguised handle-she pulled it but it didn't move. With a shaking hand she thought she found the key hole. She held the bunch of keys up and selected the smallest, "Here goes nothing..."

Her hand shook as she pressed the key against the key hole. The lock had not been used in ages but with a little wiggling Anna found the lock starting to turn. There was a clank as a hook dead bolt disengaged, "Move!" She grunted under her breath, Anna tried the door again; it didn't move so she wiggled the key in the lock then turned. Anna turned it once more, there was a click and from higher up in the door a second hook bolt disengaged. Anna twisted the key in the door a third time and a lock on the bottom slowly disengaged.

With caution, Anna opened the secret room in the loft. The door was heavy and triple locked. Nervously she peeked inside, "Hello, any ghosties in there?" The room was about six foot long by four foot wide built into the side of the building. The roof beneath the pitched slate roof formed a triangle.

House on the Hill

Inside, every surface was thickly padded. The padding looked like someone could bounce off of it for days. Anna looked at the inside of the door it was padded heavily with no handle. She realised when someone was put in this room they would not be getting out of their own accord... Anna whistled, "What a piece of work!"

The girl noticed that there was a parcel in one corner of the room. Anna had to step into the little padded room and bend down with her back to the door to reach it. Nervously she made sure that the door would not swing back and lock behind her. Curious, Anna picked the parcel up. It was heavy a piece of canvas. Anna sat down on the padded floor and unrolled the thing, "What the heck are you?" She mused.

She examined the canvas. It was a tube about arm's length. On one end, riveted on with five brass rivets in a circular pattern was a heavy leather buckle. Anna looked at it. The canvas was heavily stitched along the edges it was part of a garment! Anna looked at it closely. It was too small for a man, a woman maybe? She realised that it was torn from a straitjacket!

"What the hell!" The sleeve hit the padding and Anna scooted back against the opposite wall. She nervously approached it again. The way the material was cut it was the right sleeve of a straitjacket, complete with buckle.

Anna could see that there was something jammed in the end of the sleeve. With great reluctance Anna put her right hand in it, "Come on, give me that!" She growled at the canvas the way you would talk to a dog. It was a tight fit and she had to squirm to get her arm in. Her fingers brushed something.

Anna gritted her teeth, her fingers got a good grip on the object and pulled but her arm would not come out of the sleeve!

The girl panicked, she pulled harder and her arm popped out of the sleeve with a piece of folded paper fluttering to the floor. She picked up the paper gingerly and unfolded it. It looked like a diary page, "Did some kook leave you behind?"

Dear Diary,

I am deeply troubled by the behaviour of my twin sister Rose; she has been acting strangely, after she recovered from the fever. We were all so glad that she was better, but the fever has done something to her. It is as if not all of her has returned or something wicked was added.

I can see the look on her face when she thinks no one is looking, I have heard her talk to the servants when she thinks no one of importance is about. Peter, her betrothed has confided in me that they have had some terrible arguments and he is thinking of cancelling their engagement. Oh diary what am I to do?

Signed Jasmine

"I guess you got a straitjacket!" She murmured in response. Anna looked over the diary page. It was in neat, regular handwriting. The paper was thick and weathered. It talked about how a sister worried about her twin going mad. Anna re-read the parchment it looked like a page torn

House on the Hill

from a diary. Very carefully, Anna turned the page over in her hands. What creepy history had she found?

She swallowed, best to check this out to find out more, "Please don't let me find anything that invalidates the sale!" She wasn't sure if she could make her money back on this ghost house! Anna looked at the back of the diary page. There was a faintly drawn map it looked like the garden and there was something marked there as the forgotten dry well, "I think I know where that is..." she mused and turned around to leave the padded room just in time to see the door slam shut! She raced forwards but she heard the three clicks-there was no way she could get the door open!

Anna screamed, "Oh God I'm trapped here! What the fuck am I going to do?" She swore she could hear laughter from the other side but it must have been the wind. Anna started to scream hysterically, "Let me out! I heard you!" She banged on the door but the padding absorbed all the force of her blows. She kicked at it then fell to the floor. Despair washed over her-she started crying hot salty tears, "Please let me out! You can have anything you want, please!"

Shaking her head she sat down, still holding the paper in her hands. The door was still open. She must have been day dreaming. Anna sighed, "This is starting to get to me, I am going crazy!" She left the note on the floor of the padded room and headed out into the garden.

The garden was completely overgrown. Knee-high grass, shrubs up to her waist, brambles and other things confronted her.

Anna looked at the external walls to find the location of the dry well in relation to it. She looked around and found a big iron ring, "There you are!" Anna cleared around the ring, pulling the undergrowth out of the way to find a stone circle with an iron hatch on the top. The girl grabbed the ring and pulled but it didn't move, "Move you rusty piece of junk!"-She put her legs into it.

There was a creak like the hinges of a coffin, and a crash as the hatch fully opened. Anna ducked half expecting bats to fly past her. There was nothing, only a large black hole and a chain disappearing into it. Anna made a note to herself get that hole back filled-in.

The chain was sunken into the stonework. It was long and heavy. Slowly Anna pulled it up out of the depths. It must have been twenty feet long and on the end of the chain was a copper bucket, battered but sturdy. She looked at it then cleaned it up-it would make a nice ornament, "You're coming with me."

The bucket was full of something. Anna pulled the bundle out of the bucket. It was a large bundle of leather;

"What have we got here?" It was just material about a two foot by two foot section.

The old leather creaked horribly as she pried it open. Inside was another piece of canvas. This was quite easy to identify-it was the yoke and collar of a straitjacket-the same one the arm had come from, "Do I get a full jacket out of this at some point?" She asked, sounding like a disappointed kid at Christmas.

The collar size was too small to belong to a man and also a diary page was folded inside. When Anna opened it a small key dropped out-

Dear Diary,

I am inconsolable at the behaviour of my twin sister Rose. She has become violent. Now I fear for my own safety. We were out in the garden when she asked me to see something at the forgotten well. When I

House on the Hill

got there the well was open, she tried to get me to look down it but I refused but she then tried to force me over to the well we struggled and I had to hit her to get away. I believe she was trying to kill me, her own sister. She is something wicked that must be dealt with. I can see it openly on her face!

She has had more arguments with Peter and with Father. I have resigned myself to a course of action, the asylums are no place for family and I do love my sister but she needs to be helped.

There is that store-room that grandfather used in the old days as a smuggling hole. I have engaged a discreet carpenter to make the modifications. It is a pity father is always in his cups so it falls to me, the elder sister to deal with Rose.

Signed Jasmine

"Rose you have gone Psycho-Bitch!"

Anna looked at the key. It was brass and quite worn. She turned over the back of the diary and found a faint map. It showed the house and a room on the ground floor. It showed a set of shelves in that room then a set of stairs down and a basement. Anna hadn't seen any basement on any plan she was aware of. This worried her-what other secrets were hiding in the place?

Anna turned to walk away. She felt her trainer catch on something and fell face first into the greenery, "Oh heck!" She got up on her hands and spun around.

The old chain was somehow fastened around both her ankles. Anna reached down to free it but there was no break in the chain, nothing to free. It went tightly around both her ankles with no gap or break. Anna struggled. "What's going on, who's there? It's not funny!" She screamed in frustration, kicking her legs as one, "Let me go!" The chain moved by itself and the bucket detached from it. Anna screamed as the chain wound itself around her calves and her knees, "Please, oh God let me go!" She rolled on to her stomach and tried to crawl away on her hands and elbows.

The chain was wound around her thighs and waist crushingly-tight, "What have I done? I found that room by accident please let me go!" Anna screamed hysterically and the chain wrapped around her elbows pulling them back until they touched. "Please not my arms, it hurts! Please let me go!"

Her wrists received the same treatment and she thrashed about like crazy as the chain started to drag her back to the well. Anna squirmed around as if her life depended on it, "No! Not in the hole!" The chain remained as strong and solid as ever. Suddenly Anna felt her feet disappear into the hole! Anna screamed as she toppled backwards, "No!" Her knee and hip hit the lip of the well. She spun and her back hit the side of the well knocking the breath from her body. The girl flipped over face down into the pitch blackness, after a fraction of a second she jerked to a stop like a fish on a line. She struggled against the chain, "Let me go, please let me go!" The thing cut into her ankles. Tight bands held her legs firmly together at knee and hip.

House on the Hill

Somehow, the chain had worked its way between her legs, when she pulled on her wrists it pulled the chain there, "My arms, they hurt so much please let me go!" Her elbows may as well have been welded in place. She started weeping the sound echoing oddly about.

Anna twisted around so that she could look up, she could see the oval of light. The lid over the well came into view it clanged down with a ringing crash. Anna was alone in the dark, she screamed in desperation, "Someone! Anyone! I am down here! Please you have to help me!" How would she get out, would someone find her?

Anna blinked she was standing there. The note in her hand, it had been another daydream! Her hand was shaking and Anna kicked the bucket hard enough to put a dent in it, "You can stay," she screamed at the well, "...but you are gone, original feature or not!"

The bucket rolled into the well and the chain followed, jangling. Anna slammed the lid on the well. It closed with a reverberating, hollow clang and she stood there panting, "I don't care what it costs, that thing is going to be filled with concrete!" Anna returned to the attic for some reason. She felt that the two pieces of the jacket and the two diary pieces needed to be together, "All nice and neat."

She took one last look on the back of the second diary page and went down to the ground floor. Anna found the right room—a store next to the kitchen. The shelves didn't move but there was a latch hidden, she unclipped it then pulled on the shelves. They creaked on a hinge and swung out of the way, "Yeah, sneaky but I found you." This revealed a formidable door...

Anna found the key hole and the key went in it. It was stiff but still worked. She had to shoulder the door to get it to move but move it did.

There was a light switch. The stairs creaked as Anna moved down them. The basement was large and solid, no signs of damp, rats or rot. Anna smiled, "A saniflo, a bit of plumbing and this would make an excellent room!"

Down in the basement there was a heavy table with a canvas bundle on it. Anna picked up the bundle and examined it in the poor light, "Okay, what are you?" The bundle was the front part of a straitjacket, including the front loop, side loops and a long leather piece which must have been the crotch strap. Anna looked at the crotch strap there was something odd about it. It was staggered in construction a short wide section three inches wide that was connected to a thinner strap one inch wide, "I wonder what that's for?" She mused.

The canvas clearly belonged to the same jacket. It was tailored to a woman's waist making it tight and effective when whole. Inside the canvas bundle was a diary page folded up, Anna took the page over to the light and unfolded it. A key was inside. She held the key and read the page-

Dear Diary,

I am saddened by the deterioration of my sister's condition. Poor Rose, she has become delusional. I have followed her for some hours and have observed her going to the basement.

She was talking to someone for nearly twenty minutes, pausing and talking again—having a conversation with only one side. I checked the basement afterwards there was no one! I believe she is hearing voices.

House on the Hill

My resolve is stronger, it is a kindness! What I will have to do to her...

She has had more arguments with Father and will not even see Peter. I have found a tailor who is prepared to make what I want. I have also found a Canner who can manufacture an item to my specification. I have not yet found a Blacksmith I can trust. It is a pity Father is away today. My course is set, dear Rose.

Signed Jasmine

Anna awaited some horrible day dream but nothing came, "So for once I am not going crazy." She re-read the page. It claimed the sister Jasmine observed her twin Rose talking to people that were not there, down in the basement. Anna half-expected her subconscious to manifest voices but again nothing. She turned the page over.

On the back of the page was another faint map showing a section of the garden. Anna was sure she would find more clues there and she had the key, "Oh, not back to that overgrown mess again!"

She headed out there back into the overgrown garden. Anna noticed the path and the overgrown shrubs, but she had not noticed a lean-to shed before, "That might be handy..." She mused to herself.

It was hidden out of sight behind a tree that had shrouded it. She suspected the original designer of the garden had planned it that way...

The door was old but solid and the key worked in the lock. It rattled as it opened. Anna looked around inside the shed it was cold, dark and dusty. A big, bound chest was leaning against one wall, "Are you the last bit of the puzzle?" She asked the chest.

Anna opened the box with a creak; there was another bundle of canvas. She unrolled the left sleeve of the straitjacket, it ended in a strap. Inside it was another folded diary page.

She shook it out from the sleeve, unfolded it and walked out of the shed to read it in the light-

Dear Diary,

My hand shakes as I write this. My sister's actions are unforgivable! She has killed, I am sure of it. Dear Peter came to us today to try to talk Rose into seeing a doctor; we found him some hours later. It appeared that he had slipped on some spilt oil in the shed and landed on a bill hook, it would have taken several minutes for him to die in pain. Rose was completely indifferent to his departing! When the officers arrived she was her old self-just an act I am sure.

My resolve is hardened, forged! The measures I thought of taking first seemed extreme but now I know that they are correct. Father has

House on the Hill

further retreated into his cup. The room in the attic is almost complete. The tailor has started work, using me as a model. The Tanner has built what I asked but I have asked him to modify it. I have now found a Blacksmith I can trust. He has taken the first half of his pay. I now need to find an apothecary to supply me with a precise compound...

Signed Jasmine

Anna looked at the note. It was terrifying!

"Oh that's gruesome! There's no way she could still be around, could she?" She could feel chills going up and down her spine. She had a murder house! No wonder it was cheap that explained it- "That's something to leave off the info!" Looking at the notes, the murderer's sister was almost as loony as Rose!

The girl checked back in the shed. She half expected to see a hook still dripping blood- there was none.

Anna turned to leave, she could have sworn that the floor was dry but her trainer slipped on some oil and she felt herself falling backwards;

"What the...?" For a second she expected to be skewered on a hook. Instead she landed on the trunk. Anna curled herself in a ball to protect the back of her head. She was in the bottom of the chest and the lid shut, there was a click.

Anna pushed on the lid with her feet, "Hey, you can't be locked!" She hit the sides of the box-nothing. Her breathing became ragged. There was a tight seal on the box how much air did she have? She screamed again, "Let me out! God, I am wasting my air!"

Anna blinked. Her subconscious mind needed a rest! She was getting too nervous about her first project. She reached down with shaking fingers and picked the diary page up off the floor. Flipping it over, "I am beginning to see a common pattern..." there was another map on the back of the page showing a part of the path up to the house. Anna stopped off at the attic she threw the other scraps of paper and cloth into the room and shut the door. She made herself a cup of tea, "Nice, relaxing mint tea they can serve it to me in the loony bin!" Slowly, she calmed down then decided to continue looking for the next clue.

Anna went out the front of the house. She followed the path up from the drive and saw there was a wonky paving stone, "Gotcha!" It was the fifth one from the drive. With a bit of effort, Anna got it loose.

Straining, she lifted it up and put it to one side. Under it was a dry, hollow space built out of stone. It looked like someone had once gone to substantial effort to create a small water tight compartment. There was a plain black wooden box. Anna undid the clasp on the lid, "Could she have booby trapped this bloody thing?" She was a little hesitant but after a deep breath she opened the box.

Inside the box were a pair of... she wasn't sure what! They were too big to be hand cuffs. Anna supposed they would fit around a woman's ankle. They were shackles, big heavy loops of brass with a six inch chain between them, "Very subtle..."

The shackles had a ring in the middle about an inch on the internal width. There were three inches of links either side connecting it all together and Anna wondered why someone went to the effort of adding the central loop, "What the heck are you for?" They were gummed shut with a key lodged in the lock unmoving. The diary page was rolled up inside the centre loop-

House on the Hill

Dear Diary,

I despise my sister's stealing from the family. My Father mentioned that the books are short, I have checked them myself. She has her hand in it.

Rose would see us as paupers! I had one of the servants follow her. She has been careless with her hiding place beneath one of the slabs on the path. We both hid our childhood treasures there-I know it well.

When I have dealt with my sister I will recover the money. My action is fast approaching and I know that I am correct.

Father is as he always is. The room in the attic is complete. The tailor has finished his work, he strapped me into the garment to try it, within its embrace I was truly helpless, I told him to make it tighter. The Tanner has finished modifying his masterpiece and I will try it for size. The Blacksmith has almost finished he merely has to install the locks. I have found an apothecary he is sourcing what I ask.

Signed Jasmine

Anna carefully read the diary page again; "Let's just check. She did mean hard cash-right?" She looked in the box. Shaking it, she could see there was no false bottom or false lid. Anna checked around inside the space-there was nothing else. Going over the path again she could find no other loose or wonky stones.

Anna sighed, "Not today." She had just got to check in case any of the money Rose stole was there. Anna scanned the note. So Jasmine was almost ready to move against her sister? Anna thought about it. The large house, the large grounds-there must have been some real money in this family at one point. Still, Anna thought-after all she had been through it would be nice to find a map with X on it saying 'FAMILY SILVER BURIED HERE!'

"Only in the movies..." Anna thought for a second she heard a scream. "What? No, nothing..." She shook her head. As with every other torn diary page she reversed it and found a map on the back. It led back to the cellar under the house. She was soon traipsing back with a nice big powerful torch this time.

She looked at the page. There was a note showing a particular place on the floor and Anna remembered the comment in the diary about Rosa and Jasmine's grandfather being a smuggler-maybe this was another smuggling hole? "I wonder what you smuggled?"

Anna rooted around in the dust. She found a floor board with a notch cut in it suitable to use as a hand hold. She got a firm grip and pulled. The hatch moved but it had warped a little with time, "You **are** going to move!" She gave it a kick in just the right spot. A good firm tug and Anna got the small secret compartment open. There!

House on the Hill

Anna was unsurprised that there was a canvas bundle inside it, "Found you!" This must have been the last part of the straitjacket! It was folded in half, and then rolled up like parchment. Anna unrolled it. She confirmed her suspicions-it was the back of the straitjacket.

The two halves were still strapped together, the edges contoured for a woman's waist and the rear buckle hung down a little limply. Inside the roll was a diary page. Anna was certain that she was getting towards the end of this little adventure. She still had not seen any sign of the leather contraption. Anna unfolded the page eager to complete her little adventure and see where it was all heading.

Dear Diary,

I have received the most tragic news today, my father passed on. They said he was drinking in one of his storehouses with a lantern and that in a drunken stupor knocked it over setting a fire off.

I know better, I cannot believe my sister would murder our own father but she may possess more intelligence than I credited her with! I swore I saw someone behind me as I was about my errands. I am ready. It is an act of self preservation...

The room in the attic awaits its guest. The tailor has finished the garment, it will neutralise any in its embrace, I can attest to that. The Tanner's work is complete. I tried his masterpiece. I am glad I told him to make the bung larger, it can mute any complaint. The Blacksmith has finished his work-a testament to his craft they are comfortable yet secure. The Apothecary has furnished me with what I ask. I am ready.

Signed Jasmine

"Rose, it looks like you're going to get what you deserve..." Anna was saddened by the diary entry. That poor woman-losing her father her sister going crazy! Anna felt a sense of sympathy for Jasmine but a sense of worry that Rose was onto her sister.

She thought about the fire. The Father had been a drunk but combined with the grisly death of Peter she was sure rose had set that fire.

Anna turned the page over. On the back of the diary page was a map to Jasmine's room. Up on the top floor was one last hidey hole. Before Anna could take two steps she felt dizzy and she swayed from side to side. It felt as if someone or something pushed her, "What the hell?"

Before she could react, she was falling backwards. She caught the back of her head on the lip of the smuggler's hole. Anna laid on the floor dazed half in and half out of the hole. She swore she saw a woman in an old fashioned dress then she felt hands fold her legs into the hole her arms were fed between her legs her head was pushed down and she was gently eased into it, "Please don't..." She murmured.

House on the Hill

The hatch was pulled shut and closed with some force. Anna started to come round but it was too late. The hole was too tight-she was tightly trapped in a helpless little ball. She could hear the scraping screeching as something heavy was dragged across the floor.

Anna shook her head, "No please..." She was back in the room. She was getting fed-up with these little episodes of hers, "Oh I need some drugs!" The girl carefully picked her way upstairs. She found the room that was Jasmine's.

Anna looked carefully-there was a certain floorboard. It didn't match the rest, maybe it had at one point but it did not now. Anna pushed on it, it moved. She manoeuvred it in a certain way and it opened up, "Another smuggler's hole?" She carefully checked out the space. There was a desiccated bundle of leather. It was the remains of what was once a fearsome looking leather muzzle with (Anna thought for a second) blinkers that could be pulled-up over the person wearing the muzzle's eyes; "You were a sadistic bitch weren't you?"

There was also a diary with several pages torn out. Anna looked through the diary. Most of it was drivel. There was quite a lot about Peter-it looked like Jasmine had a yen for Rose's boyfriend...

On the last page of the diary there was some more interesting text it was written in different handwriting-

Dearest Sister's Diary,

I have the most tragic news today. My dear sister Jasmine disappeared. She was obviously guilty of killing poor Father and Peter who she lusted after, shamelessly. She has run away with a large portion of the family money. Still, I will get by.

That is what the world thinks at least. The room in the attic has its permanent guest. The tailor did excellent work. My sister is enthralled in the embrace of his creation! She begged me so not to tighten it any more but I had to be certain. The leather crafter excelled. My sisters wagging tongue is finally silenced. Muzzled like a common hound. She cried into the gag so much I had to cover her eyes despite her mute protests. It is an ingenious creation that will silence her for a long time to come. The smiths' work was so fine. My sister likes her little ankle bracelets, they work so well with the straitjacket turning her into such a pathetic little bundle. The apothecary is a snake, my snake so my sister is delivered into my tender mercies.

Signed Rose

Anna felt a knot in the pit of her stomach, "So, no happy endings for Jasmine then?" That poor woman! Jasmine kept a prisoner by her crazed sister possibly tormented for years! Anna

House on the Hill

wondered whether Rose had left the diary pages and the pieces of broken restraint or if Jasmine had managed to get free and turn the tables on her sister?

Anna had a very vivid vision after reading the sister's account. She saw a small, helpless brunette confined in the padded room unable to speak or see, barely able to squirm in her tight bindings. Her twin took her place while keeping her bound, gagged and shackled in the attic;

"Okay I am seeing things." She needed a drink after going through all that, "Alcohol, the solution to my problems!" She collected everything together and left the bits of straitjacket, shackles, gag and diary in the padded room in the loft. It felt fitting that everything should be in there. Anna went to the nearest store, got a small bottle of vodka and headed back.

The girl found the vodka quite comforting she drank most of the bottle and she had no more visions or dreams or anything else all night.

In the morning, Anna decided she would look one last time at the padded room and its contents then she would cover it over and put a false wall in front of it. Anna shone the torch in the room her jaw dropped, "That's impossible!"

The diary was now intact, no pages missing or loose! The cover did not look aged, the pages were not weathered. It was still old-fashioned but age did not seem to have touched it. The straitjacket was whole. Anna held it up against herself it was of fiendish design and rigorous construction. It would be so tight over its victim's body! The arms held completely immobile, "How?" She put the jacket down and picked up the shackles. They were bright, lustrously shiny-new! Anna checked the key in them. They opened and shut without a sound. Finally Anna picked up the muzzle. It was restored. The buckles were bright, the leather supple producing a powerful smell.

The muzzle would fit over a woman's face, fastened by two straps behind it and one below. There was a blindfold that could be flipped up from the cheeks to cover the eyes it could be held in place by a strap that would go around the crown of the head. Anna held the gag up to her face, "She *was* crazy."

The fiendish nature of the muzzle was in the plug. There was a lip on the inside of the gag that would hold the jaws open with or without the large plug pushed in place, you did not need to remove the gag to feed its victim so you never had to un-gag them.

Anna was not sure what to do. She had seen something impossible unless someone was jerking her around, not that she wasn't sure there was some sort of con on.

She got more vodka she slept badly that night. In the middle of the night Anna woke up she moved sluggishly like she was in a trance. She was in her socks and underwear. She went up to the attic she unlocked the padded room but left the key in the lock. She went into the padded room. Anna removed the diary and the keys on the outside. She stripped removing her underwear and socks.

Anna carefully picked up the muzzle. She held the leather to her lips, she opened her jaw wide to accommodate the bung she pushed gently and her teeth hit the lip of the gag. Anna forced her jaw open wider and the gag settled into her mouth.

The girl moved her hair out of the way and gently buckled both straps behind her head. She adjusted the gag and pushed the bung in further. Anna strapped closed the buckle below her chin forcing her to bite-down on the gag hard. She picked up the pair of shackles, bent down slowly and wrapped one around her right ankle, snapping it shut. A second later her left ankle received the same treatment. Anna tested the restraint, it really limited her movement. The shackles were heavy but comfortable, perfect for long term wear...

Anna did up the straps on the back of the jacket she wiggled herself inside. It took a lot of effort to get her head through the collar even though the top-most strap was loose.

House on the Hill

Working her arms into the tight sleeves was difficult, they were so restrictive but eventually she did it. She did not do up the crotch strap or the arm straps she couldn't properly reach them. Anna curled up in a ball in the padded cell and went to sleep.

The girl felt a twinge as she slept but ignored it as she rested her head on the padding. While she was asleep the muzzle around her delicate features moved. The two straps behind her head tightened and it pushed further into her mouth, tighter over her lips. The strap below the gag also tightened and Anna was forced to bite down harder on the rim of the gag. Finally the blinders flipped up to cover Anna's eyes. They were thickly padded and cut out all light.

The strap wrapped itself around Anna's forehead, it bucked itself shut. The leather bung sunk into the muzzle up to its limit filling every corner of Anna's mouth. Blind and thoroughly mute Anna slept on.

The straps on the back of the jacket began to tighten one by one, starting at the top crawling one space then stopping. The next strap moved in a similar way then the next. After three passes the edges of the jacket were firmly shut together. After another two passes the jacket hugged every contour of Anna's little body. Another two passes and it was like a giant invisible hand was clamped down on her torso. Yet Anna still remained quietly asleep.

The straitjacket had transcended a restraint and now became a punishment. The ankle shackles tighten until they were snug. They seemed designed not to close further. The ends of the sleeves moved of their own accord. Anna felt her arms go through the front loop of the jacket. She stirred in her sleep but did not wake.

The straps then went through the side loops they were tight and snug then the straps met together behind her back. They fed one through the other then they got tighter and tighter until there wasn't a millimetre of movement possible in Anna's arms.

The crotch strap was quite long and it worked its way to Anna's ankles. The tip of the strap went between the ankle cuffs through the purpose made ring. The long strap then made its way back towards the buckle at the rear of the jacket. Anna's ankles were pulled towards her bottom. The crotch strap met the buckle, the ring in between the ankle cuffs hit the wide section of the crotch strap, as the strap tightens itself Anna's ankles were pulled back into a cruelly strict hogtie.

The door to the padded room propelled by some unseen force slammed shut. Whatever spell held Anna unconscious evaporated in time for her to hear the click, click, click of the deadlocks on the door.

It took Anna a second to work out what was going on, "Mmm! Mm, mmph!" She felt the padding underneath her body she heard the click of the locks. Anna tried to stand but she found just how tight and secure the combination of the ankle cuffs and the crotch strap was. Her ankles were held tight against her round bottom, "Mmm, mm-mph!" She had a little play, a few inches either side. However, when she struggled, the wide crotch strap dug in tightly between her bottom and legs. Anna tried to move her arms. She had half an inch of play up and down and an infinitesimal amount of movement backwards and forwards, "Mmm mm mph!" The lower part of her right arm was pushed hard against her left she could not separate them at all.

The gag was the worse bit, the leather invading her mouth, the blindfold over her eyes, the knowledge that she could do nothing about it. Anna had a phrase floating about in the back of her head acute stress reaction. It meant she told herself she was traumatised by what she had read-she was making-it-up! It was all in her mind but the solid restraints said different, "Mm mph!" Fear welled-up inside her! She was trapped, hogtied and gagged inside a straitjacket inside a hidden locked padded room!

House on the Hill

The room was inside a locked building, the building was inside a locked property with big heavy gates and the property was in a forgotten corner of a backwater town. It ran through her head she was going to die. It would be slow, it would not be pretty. It would be from dehydration if she didn't choke on the gag and suffocate to death!

It took a while for all that to sink in, she was in shock! She could feel herself going numb-it was an experience so extreme, disturbing and unexpected. She feared her mind was trying to escape to shut down.

Fear welled-up in her belly, it came from the stress on her mind, the pain running through her body. She went crazy-struggling, screaming, "Mmm! Mph!" she cried-out and pulled at her arms and cuffed ankles, she started to sob into her gag-she had no hope!

Anna thought to herself that it would not do her any good if she gave up. There had to be a way! If she could get her arms free or her teeth or even her toes she might be able to do something. This room was very old. There had to be some weakness in its construction.

She thought her predicament might not be as bad. Anna decided it was better to get angry and she screamed her defiance but she could not be heard even if someone stood on the other side of the door.

Anna tried every way she could think of to move the gag but she could not be heard. She tried to move the arms of the jacket. Maybe she could rip something loose or find a little exploitable slack?

"Mph!"

She tried to thrash about, struggling like a mad woman for fifteen minutes but her arms and legs remained just as tightly bound. All she had achieved was to tire herself out and make the crotch strap tight. She was still so tightly bound. She wept into her cruel gag.

Anna felt hopeless despair wash over her. Her anger, her defiance against her fate was gone. She thought about it. It had to be the ghost of Rose or Jasmine! There had to be some sort of supernatural explanation but there was no trick or prank that could explain what she had seen or what had been done to her!

There was no light in the little padded room but then there was a gentle green luminescence. It settled into two balls of green one fell to the floor it grew larger and larger it took on the form of a woman. She was restrained as tightly as Anna in identical supernatural restraints.

The second ball of light grew larger it formed a ghostly green woman the mirror image of the first. Rose looked down on Anna and her sister a ghostly hand reached down and caressed Anna across her bottom, Anna felt it and tried to struggle. There was a wicked look in Rose's eyes.