

Bard Ghost Stories Podcast

Josh: Welcome back everyone to a very special edition of our Bard podcast series. This is a Halloween edition. We're gonna hear about some ghost stories and here with me—this is Josh Tyler. You may recognize me from some of the other podcast series. I'm here with the dean of students Bethany Nohlgren to talk to us about some of these ghost stories. Bethany, how did you acquire these ghost stories?

Bethany: I've been at Bard for 15 years and I'm totally fascinated by ghosts and so I have asked people who've been around at Bard for a long time. I've also been here when some of these things have happened so I've heard firsthand from the folks who it happens, uhm, who it happened to.

Josh: Have you ever seen a ghost?

Bethany: I've never seen a ghost! No! I really want to. Like, I think that that's why the ghosts don't let me see them because I think they know I'm so desperate to see them but they're like "You know what she's a little needy, we're gonna wait".

Josh: Makes Sense.

Bethany: So, I haven't but I also don't hang out in some of these locations late at night or in quiet areas so.

Josh: Are specific locations on campus where these things these events happen more often so than others?

Bethany: I think quite notoriously Blithewood Manor is, or Blithewood Mansion, is the one place that is probably the most famous on campus for having a ghost.

Josh: Okay.

Bethany: Many students have said that they have seen her, a youngish girl, on the third floor walking around or in the windows. So many students have reported this when it used to be a women's residence hall. People who live there say that they have seen her. Security has said that they have seen her, so that's probably the most notorious. A friend of mine who fancies herself clairvoyant says that Manor is quite haunted. We went in there one time over the summer for a thing and she got completely freaked out and wouldn't stay. This is not someone who works at Bard.

Josh: okay

Bethany: And then this very building that we are right now there's been ghost stories

Josh: in this building, Hopson Cottage?

Bethany: in this building Hopson Cottage.

Josh: The admissions office?

Bethany: The Admissions office.

Josh: What stories have you heard about about?

Bethany: About Hopson? Well, so this happened maybe ten years ago. There were two security guards named Gino and Fred, "Freddie", and they were overnight shift during the week. Hobson, for those of you who have been in this space, has a very lovely kitchen. It's an old house so it has a very nice house feel and Gino and Freddie would often eat their dinner or their break lunch, you know, halfway through their shift, about four o'clock in the morning they would eat here and so as the story goes Freddie who was six five—he looked like a lumberjack or like a linebacker he was like six five really big guy—and Gino who was like tall and skinny. They little Laurel and Hardy look to them, right? So Freddie comes in. He walks in the front door he goes into the kitchen he's getting his dinner prepared. Uses the microwave all of this kind of stuff. He gets his food and he starts to walk out of the door of the kitchen. He walks through the dining room and stops dead because there's a huge Victorian chair, that normally sits in the lobby of this building, that had been moved from the side of the wall to right in the middle of the doorway of the dining room. And in Freddie's head he thinks, "Ha ha ha! Gino's playing a joke on me."

Josh: Right

Bethany: So he radios to Gino and Gino was like, you know, "I'm on the other side of campus." He's (Freddie's) like "Yeah right. Come on!" you know? And Gino's like "No seriously, I'm not. I'm nowhere near." So Freddie freaks out a little bit backtracks and walks out the back door and he goes out the front of the house and he radios to Gino and Gino comes driving over. Now all of this is happening at 3:00 4:00 in the morning right? He's waiting on a front porch and Gino kind of makes fun of him and says forget it, you know, like of course the chair didn't move like I wasn't there and the chair didn't move you're being ridiculous so they open the front door. And there are two doors to the front here. It's like a vestibule, right? They open the first door, fine. They open the second door and chair has now moved. And the chair is right in front of them.

Josh: So the chair keeps following them?

Bethany: The chair keeps following them.

Josh: Whichever door they're going to?

Bethany: Whatever door. And Gino then accuses Freddy of having moved the chair right okay and they start scrambling and like yelling at each other and like no you did it no man you did right and Freddy's completely freaked out because he knows he didn't move the chair and he's now seen the chair moved twice. There's nobody else in the building. Freddy had to unalarmed the building when he came in so there's nobody walking around and Gino's convinced Freddy's now playing a joke on him.

Josh: Right.

Bethany: So Freddy says I'll show you. No I'll show you. So they go out they go back out the front door walk around the side of the building come in the side door they walk in the side door and the chair has moved again, right in front of the dining room. And they both freaked out. They both scream, They turn around and they run out of the building. and they wouldn't come back in.

Josh: I was gonna say was that the end?

Bethany: They were like forget it.

Josh: End of the midnight lunch?

Bethany: End of the midnight lunch. Lunch was left in there. They didn't come back in. They waited till the next shift came and they were like you guys go deal with it. And by the time the next shift came in at 7:00 in the morning, the chair was back in exactly its place.

(continued)

Josh: Where it had been left?

Bethany: Where it had been left.

Josh: When the Admission staff left?

Bethany: Yup, left.

Bethany: So that's the case of they're moving chair

Josh: Is that the only story?

Bethany: So there was, so for a long time there was a rumor that there was a light that never turned off in this building. Have you heard that story?

Josh: I haven't heard that.

Bethany: Oh okay, so apparently there's some closet or some hallway light that like literally has never turned off and nobody ever knew where the switch was and they, so they just thought it was sort of a ghost light.

Josh: okay.

Bethany: I think that's been solved. That there were like was a weird light switch in a closet somewhere.

Josh: And it's been found?

Bethany: And it's been found, but for many—you should talk to your people here because apparently there was quite the story.

Josh: I notice that the basement light is on often.

Bethany: Oh.

Josh: And no one ever goes down there. Now it could be workers. I don't know . . .

Bethany: Right, right.

Josh: . . . to check on, you know the furnace is down there and some other things but it is often on and the cleaning supplies are upstairs

Bethany: So it's not cleaning staff.

Josh: So that's a different light

Bethany: Okay

Josh: I don't know. So maybe there is a light thing.

Bethany: There could be a light thing

Josh: Not an electrical thing.

(continued)

Bethany: No, no, no.

Josh: Could just be somebody left it on.

Bethany: Yeah, yeah.

06:58

Josh: So you mentioned Manor.

Bethany: Manor!

Josh: Is there a specific story?

Bethany: There's a really good story. It's actually connected. So Manor is a residence hall. Before it was a residence hall it was a private home actually and it was owned by the Ward Baking Company family in New York City and this starts this story starts in the late 90s. There was an on-call call. a girl called security, a student, and said "There's a ghost in my room. Someone needs to come." You know. So the staff member who was on call went over and you know we thought maybe she was intoxicated or you shouldn't . . . you know whatever, right? So he goes in expecting that there's some drunk girl or something saying you know she was totally sober sitting in a corner of her room freaked out under the covers and she was crying and she was saying she's here and she doesn't want me in here.

Josh: Ooh.

Bethany: And and the staff member was like well and interestingly his name was Fred not the same Fred.

Josh: OK.

Bethany: A different Fred. Um he was the director of ResLife and he was like who's here and she said she's here and she doesn't want me to be right and she's freaking out prior and front was like okay sweetie you know sort of like let's talk this through and he kind of gets into the room and as he gets closer to the student she starts to scream a little more and she's like she doesn't want you here either you have to leave you have to leave and he's like I'm not gonna leave everything's okay don't worry and he's still thinking maybe she's not fully there you know

Josh: right

Bethany: And she's crying and she's saying she she wants me to leave she wants me out of here she doesn't want me here and she doesn't want you either we have to leave but I keep like she was so scared she couldn't leave the room okay and Fred was like it's really gonna be okay don't worry and Fred sits down on the girls bed just on the edge because she's kind of curled up in the corner and the girl starts shaking and saying like this is really bad she doesn't want you here she look at her she doesn't and Fred was like I don't see anybody and she's like look at her she's you know right crying sobbing and Fred was like take deep breath we're gonna figure this out and all of a sudden the girls like oh no right and Fred looks across the room and in the indent of the roommates bed on the cover this like seat the like a but sitting down into the covers in dense into the bed. he sees the covers and the mattress indent and she was like you have to leave and Fred freaks out and he was like we're getting out of here and he grabs the girl's hand and he just runs outside with her. Right.

Josh: Wow

Bethany: And they leave the ghost in there.

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Josh: Okay. Which is what...

Bethany: Which is what you do! ghost ghost got what the ghost wanted so they find her a room to sleep in for the night everything's fine you know the girl moves out she's like I'm never living in there again right so flash forward about four years four or five years this is when I first got to Bard,

Josh: Okay.

Bethany: In the early 2000s. And opening day. All the sophomores juniors and seniors are returning. Everybody is packing, you know unloading. Parents are here. And we get a call that there's a student and her mom who are having in fight at Manor and that Fred needs to go mitigate this fight, figure out what's happening. So Fred shows up and really concerned and it's at that room, okay? And the girl is trying to unload her stuff into the room and the mom won't let her. And mom is like, "Bad things have happened in this room. You cannot live in this room." And Fred was like, "What seems to be the problem here?" Right?

Josh: Right.

Bethany: And the girls like, "I want to live in this room! This is the room I picked in room draw! I want to live here! My mom won't let me live here! Tell her I'm allowed to live here!" And Fred kind of looks at the mom and she was like, "I don't know what kind of energy is happening here. There is dangerous energy in this room. Whoever is in there doesn't want us here. Were not moving in."

Josh: Really?

Bethany: Yeah and the student was like, "Mom don't be so dramatic!" and stuff you know and clearly the mom was clairvoyant and had had experiences like this and the girl was embarrassed.

Josh: Right.

Bethany: she was like leave me alone you just go to the car a huge fight right

Josh: Right.

Bethany: And the mom turns to Fred and says, "I'm not, she can't live, like I will not pay for this room. She cannot live in this room." And meanwhile the roommate is moving in like, "Hey! Couldn't care less." Right?

Josh: Right.

Bethany: and the mom says, "Bad things happened here." And Fred was like "Yeah." Everything's about, like he knows exactly right. He was like, "I've avoided this room for years cuz, I don't, I'm scared of it." I actually don't know what room it is.

Josh: Okay.

Bethany: And so the girl ended up not living that room and the other roommate was like score I got a double room all by myself you know and the girl ended up moving and nothing ever happened but the girl who was supposed to live there reported that year every time she went to go visit her friend she got really creepy vibes and would like not stay very long because she was like, like

Josh: Really?

(continued)

Bethany: it got cold it got weird I always felt uncomfortable one time I went and I started to feel sick so there's like

Josh: The girl who lived there was fine?

Bethany: Totally fine.

Josh: hmm.

Bethany: so maybe the ghost there just like has certain people right

Josh: Got it

Bethany: yeah.

Josh: Has anything happened since?

Bethany: Not that I know of. Peer counselors and staff who or students who live in the building report funny things

Josh: Okay

Bethany: But it could be wind
it's an old building

Bethany: It's an old building. it could be creaking, like electricity. Everything could be explained of the stories I've heard. Like windows flying open and, like, things whooshing down a hall and like things crashing over. All of that could like be a weird wind tunnel. It's got a lot of nooks and crannies and windy hallways. So it could be explained by physics.

Josh: Yeah.

Bethany: But these to stories, like those two are not exactly physics Oh boy

Bethany: That's not yeah okay

13:21

Josh: Okay so bring me back. You mentioned Blithewood.

Bethany: The mothership!

Josh: And most of the things have happened there.

Bethany: That's the mothership, yeah

Josh: Are there any specific stories?

Bethany: There's a really good one. Okay So this would have happened to a friend of mine. In about 2006-2007 he was security. He was working the summer and a lot of the security guards report that the ghost in Blithewood is nicer to women than to men

(continued)

Josh: okay

Bethany: So at this particular time my friend Alex, who is a man, was being shown around. How to unlock and all of this kind of stuff. So his first couple weeks you just, like, you Shadow other officers, right? And then so his first night all by himself, um, he's walking through Manor. Everything's fine. He goes to the third floor and the third floor of Manor is, uh not Manor sorry. We're talking about Blithewood. I apologize. The third floor Blithewood it's an office. So it's kind of cubically. There are like big white boards on the walls. There's chalkboards up there. It looks like an office.

Josh: Right.

Bethany: It's pretty boring. And, the, he's walking by. He sees a big whiteboard with, you know like, um, you know, those, uh, alphabet letters like a toddler...

Josh: Yeah

Bethany: Right they're all kind of scattered. Clearly people have been playing with them. Stuff is written on the board . No big deal, right? He walks down the hallway. Checks all the doors. There's one that's unlocked. He locks it. Turns around, Walks away and he hears "Creeeeek"

Josh: The door opened?

Bethany: He turned around. The door had opened. He thought, "Okay wind. This Happens." You know? So he walks back. The door was locked, so pulls it closed. Really checks to make sure it's really shut. Totally shut. It's locked. Walks away. Five seconds later. "Creeeeek" The door opens again and Alex had been trained [to] just talk to the ghost. Okay? So Alex says, "I don't want to bother anybody I'm just here to make sure everything's locked up for the night. Don't worry I'll be out of your hair in a second" So he's like chatting.

Josh: okay

Bethany: He's a little freaked out.

Josh: mm-hmm

Bethany: So he starts walking and this chair knocks over in front of him.

Josh: Really?

Bethany: Uh huh. And he's like, "It's okay. I just need to make sure all the doors are locked. I'm not gonna touch anything. I'm not gonna take anything." He upends the chair, right writes the chair. Goes to the door. Shuts the door . . .again. Walks away and it goes "Creeeeek" and a chair falls in front of the door because it was like just a chair so you know

Josh: okay

Bethany: And he's like, "It's really okay." you know? He's trying to talk to this ghost right?

Josh: Okay.

Bethany: And and try not to freak out.

(continued)

Josh: Mmm-hm.

Bethany: At the same time he doesn't see anything, he doesn't hear anything. Doesn't.

Josh: Okay

Bethany: So he finally says like, "Look just let me shut the door and then I'll leave." right? So he goes he puts the chair right. Shuts the door, jamb, makes sure it's locked. Turns around walks really slowly. Nothing happens, right?

Josh: Okay

Bethany: He's walking really slowly, really slowly. Nothing happens and all of a sudden he sort of stops and takes a deep breath and looks like, "Oh thank God" and he looks over at a whiteboard

Josh: okay

Bethany: And in those little letters it says, "Welcome Alex"

Josh: serious?

Bethany: mm-hmm. And he freaks out! Because he knows nobody else is up there.

Josh: right

Bethany: He walked in there by himself. So he radios the other person.

Josh: okay

Bethany: To say, "Hey. Where, like are you downstairs?" and, you know, you when you hear these radios you can hear them you know all around.

Josh: Yeah, absolutely.

Bethany: So he thinks, "Okay. If I radio I'll hear it down the hall.

Josh: Right.

Bethany: This guy messing with me, right? So he hears it and the other guy's like, "Yeah, no I'm up at the SummerScape." because it was early summer. He's like, "We're out on crowd control." and he can hear noise in the background [static] you know, and stuff. And Alex is like, "You're not at Blithewood?" And he's like, "No we're up at the performing arts center helping with crowd control up here" and Alex is just like, "So you really nowhere around here?" And he's like, "No we're fine" right? And he's like, "Okay! All right, well, uh", you know? And he looks at the board and he says, "Well, thank you" and then he walks out of Blithewood. Locks the building. Arms it. Gets in his car. Drives away.

Josh: okay

Bethany: He never had a problem in Blithewood after that. Everybody else reported like funny things happening. Like people have recorded seeing, like, one security officer has seen her walk up the stairs

Josh: okay

(continued)

Bethany: So realistic that he thought it was a student who was like, um

Josh: really?

Bethany: Yeah. Who had gotten in the building. Everyone has reported seeing her and Alex is like, I never saw her again. Like nothing ever bothered ...

Josh: okay

Bethany: Yeah and he came home from work. He worked the overnight shift and he was my friend's, he is my friend's husband and he told us that story that night. I was like "Get out of here! That's the greatest story ever!" I was like I really need to see this, like "I need to go!" but I've never seen her yeah

Josh: yeah oh

Bethany: So that's the, that's the, but Blithewood has the most. I think if you were like solicit stories, cuz it was a women's residence hall for a long time

Josh: right

Bethany: So people have definitely seen stuff.

Josh: very interesting

Bethany: Yeah, yeah.

Josh: Any others?

Bethany: There are others but I feel like those are the three biggie's those are sort of the whoppers.

Josh: yeah Those were pretty big

Bethany: Those were the whoppers

Josh: Well, thank you.

Bethany: Yeah, you're welcome, Thank you for having me.

Josh: Yeah and certainly be sure to stay tuned for our next podcast. Certainly a different type of topic next time but we hope you enjoyed our ghost stories from Bard and we will look forward to talking with you again soon. Take care.