

# Tales of the Supernatural

Frank Brennan

## Before reading

1. Look at the front cover. Check 'supernatural' in your dictionary.
2. Read the back cover blurb. Which part of the sentence gives the meaning of 'supernatural'?
3. Read about the stories in the blurb. Choose one which you'd like to read.
4. Find the story and read the first page. Do you want to continue? If not, choose another.
5. If you have the cassette, listen to the story you have chosen.

## Check your reading

### Irish Rose

1. Match the characters to the sentences.
  - 1 Mary Flynn in 2004.
  - 2 Mary Flynn in 2104.
  - 3 Declan Knight.
  - 4 The handsome young man with dark red hair.
  - 5 Celia Jones.
  - a She's nearly thirty and will soon be too old to model.
  - b Her long, black hair and clear skin were every fashion photographer's dream.
  - c The woman's hair was white and her skin was full of the many lines of great age.
  - d ... he was the best-looking man in the room, even though he was well over thirty.
  - e He had a look in his eyes that seemed to say, 'I know what you want, I know what you need.'
2. Put the sentences in order.
  - a It was Irish music and it was coming from beyond the gate. So there was a dance!
  - b She felt her face go red. She turned away from the man – who was he to look at her like that?
  - c She felt as if she could just go on dancing, dancing, dancing and never stop!
  - d Now people were coming towards her. Did she need any help?
  - e In all her eighteen years, she had never known such happiness.
  - f She could see herself in the mirror, her beautiful long hair, her beautiful red dress.
  - g But not even crying for a hundred years could change the date she saw: 31 July 2104.
  - h She would dance with him. But just one dance. The man picked up a bowl of fruit from somewhere and offered it to her.
  - i The whole world must see the beautiful, intelligent Mary Flynn dance on this, her night of nights!
3. Do you think it is fair that Mary Flynn becomes old and ugly? Why or why not?

### Haw Par Villa

1. Match the questions to the answers.
  - 1 Why did Raymond take his son Johnnie to Haw Par Villa?
  - 2 What gave Johnnie bad dreams for many years?
  - 3 Why were people afraid of Johnnie's father?
  - 4 What did Raymond want his son to do?
  - 5 Who was the strange old woman at the funeral?
  - 6 Why didn't Johnnie want to take his son to Haw Par Villa?
  - 7 What did Johnnie see on his return to Haw Par Villa?
  - a Because he was afraid of the painted people.
  - b Because of the snake tattoo on his arm.
  - c Someone who thought that Raymond had killed her son.
  - d The little painted murderer.
  - e A snake tattoo on the arm of the painted murderer, and the old woman, smiling.
  - f To teach him about right and wrong ways of living.
  - g To join the family restaurant business.
2. Who said what?
 

a person at the villa   Johnnie   Raymond   Linda   Wesley

  - a 'He was a murderer . . . . That is what a murderer can expect in the next life.'
  - b 'Will my grandchildren live in another country and not ever see their own grandfather?'
  - c 'Who was that awful woman? . . . She looked like she hated your father.'
  - d 'I'm afraid she thinks that my father killed her son.'
  - e 'But those ugly little painted people! I was so afraid of them when I was a boy.'
  - f 'Your father believed in them . . . You don't. And you'll make sure your son doesn't either.'
  - g 'That old lady is standing next to them. She's often there with a big smile on her face.'
  - h 'Look at that little man there, Daddy . . . He's just like grandfather! Look at his arm!'
3. What did the snake tattoo mean?

### Banshee

1. Complete the summary.
 

In the corner of the screen, Holly and Conor saw a woman with ..... hair and a sad ....., who looked like she was ..... her hands. They heard a voice, like the ..... of someone in ..... . Later, they saw the woman with ..... eyes and long ..... hair outside their bedroom window, ..... metres above the ground. That night, Holly's father Bill was .....
2. Tick (✓) the correct sentences.
  - a A banshee is someone from your family, from the past.
  - b A banshee is a stranger to your family.
  - c A banshee brings news of a death in the family.
  - d A banshee is the bringer of death.
  - e If you see a banshee, you will die.
  - f If you see a banshee somebody else will die.
  - g You should tell everybody that you have seen a banshee.
  - h You should tell nobody that you have seen a banshee.
3. What do you think will happen after the end of the story?

## The Yew Trees

1. Choose from the list of people.

Rupert Blake a green man Zoe Blake Adam Ross  
a young man an older man

Who . . .

- a thought the trees looked beautiful together?
- b wanted to cut down a tree to get a better view?
- c knew the trees and told the Blakes not to kill them?
- d cut his arm with a chain saw?
- e cut down the wrong tree?
- f saw a green woman step out from the tree?
- g died while trying to cut down the tree?
- h stepped into the body of Adam Ross?
- i made sure nobody touched the trees again?

2. Find two correct sentences. Correct the mistakes in the other sentences.

- a Both the trees had dark green leaves and round red berries.
  - b Zoe found a gardener to look at the trees.
  - c The trees were male and female, like people.
  - d The trees had grown together for hundreds of years.
  - e Mr Ross offered to cut back the branches of Eve.
  - f The Blakes took Mr Ross's advice about the trees.
3. Mr Ross said: 'She is resting at the moment. She is very tired. But you might see her – if I need help.' (page 35) What did he mean?

## Tea

1. Who are these characters?

- 1 Alice DeLancie.
- 2 Chris Horton.
- 3 Monsieur Dupont.
- 4 Zen.
- 5 Chris 'Zen' Horton.
- 6 Rousseau.

- a The owner of Chris's Paris flat.
- b A Japanese artist who killed himself in the flat.
- c The new Chris, interested in Japanese life and art.
- d A famous Parisian writer.
- e A travel writer.
- f A writer's agent.

2. Match the beginnings and endings.

- 1 After receiving an email from Chris's publisher
- 2 Chris seemed more interested in Japanese life and art
- 3 Zen, a Japanese artist, had killed himself in Chris's flat
- 4 Monsieur Dupont sold Zen's pictures to Chris,
- 5 On the same day that Zen had died,
- 6 After Rousseau said that Zen was a great artist,
- 7 Chris was now free of Zen

- a Chris invited Alice, and television and newspaper reporters to the flat.
- b to make people take his art seriously.
- c Chris dropped the knife.
- d Alice decided to visit Chris again in Paris.
- e and could finish the book.
- f and also the knife Zen had used to kill himself.
- g than in finishing his travel book.

## A Bed for Ambrose

1. What is FACT or POSSIBLE? Write F or P after the sentences.

- a Ambrose died in hospital.
- b Ambrose was shot.
- c Ambrose killed his mother.
- d His mother knew about his job.
- e The nurse was his mother's ghost.
- f Ambrose would feel sorry about his crimes.
- g At the end of the story, Ambrose understood what had happened to him.

2. Where do you think Ambrose was when he woke up after seeing himself from above?

3. Do you believe in a 'next world'? What do you think happens after death?

## We Will Wait, Too

1. Complete the paragraph:

inspiration thoughts stories writers live characters

When ..... think they have a new idea they call it ..... . If they only knew their new ideas are often us, the ghosts of unborn ..... , who have walked into their ..... . We are ghosts who want to ..... through their .....

## After reading

Choose some of these activities.

- 1. Do you know any tales of the supernatural from your country? Tell the story to your classmates.
- 2. Why do you think people enjoy reading about the supernatural?
- 3. What do you think – are ghosts fact, possibility or just ideas?
- 4. Raymond Ang said: 'Life is like that . . . You only get what you put into it. It all comes back to you in the end.' (page 15) What did he mean? Do you agree?
- 5. Look at the picture in each story. What part of the story does the picture show?
- 6. Which story was your favourite? Why?
- 7. What happens after the stories finish? Choose a story and write an extra page.
- 8. Make some of your own activities for other students to do, e.g. Write some 'Who said . . .?' questions.