

STORM HOUSE

Written by

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EXT. BRITISH MUSEUM FRONTAGE - DAY

Mid-morning in the courtyard at the front of the British Museum in London, where tourists take pictures of each other and school parties trundle by in crocodile formation.

INT. BRITISH MUSEUM EGYPTIAN ROOM - DAY

A large room containing glass cases and sarcophagi. A teacher, MR BIGGINS (52, wispy, grey) stands in front of a case containing a MUMMIFIED FIGURE. He drones on to a class of bored SCHOOLCHILDREN, all wearing high-vis jackets, whilst nearby a CLEANER is mopping up.

MR BIGGINS

The Egyptians possessed a complex, highly ritualised set of rules for their burials. All of which are absolutely fascinating.

The Children look around them as the Cleaner opens a bottle of cleaning fluid.

MR BIGGINS (CONT'D)

They believed that by preserving the physical body, using techniques involving oils and specific spices, the soul itself could be preserved. These beliefs may seem ridiculous to us now, of course, but they did sincerely believe that death was not the end.

During this one of the Children notices something moving in one of the cabinet - it's one of the MUMMIES! The group of children move, slowly at first, away from Mr Biggins to look.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

A gloomy office, where a SECURITY GUARD sits reading the paper in front of a bank of screens. One of them shows several children with their faces pressed against a case. A Mummy is banging on the glass from inside.

INT. BRITISH MUSEUM EGYPTIAN ROOM - DAY

All the cases now contain living Mummies, trying to get out, and the children are becoming scared. The cleaner notices what's happening and quickly screws the lid back on the cleaning fluid. Mr Biggins finally realises that nobody is listening to him.

MR BIGGINS

Children! This will be on your worksheets, pay attention!

The Mummy in the case behind him smashes through the glass and GRABS HIM BY THE NECK. Children SCREAM. ALARMS go off.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Lights flash, the security guard is desperately hiding his newspaper, and the administrator, MS WALLACE (27, attractive, buttoned-up smart) strides in.

MS WALLACE

What the hell's going on?

The security guard backs away from the screens. Ms Wallace stands in their blue glow and watches as Mr Biggins tries to fight off the Mummy. She hangs her head in despair.

MS WALLACE (CONT'D)

Oh no. We'll have to call Storm House.

EXT. STORM HOUSE - DAY

Sir Hugo Storm's House Of Unusual Interest ("Storm House") is a run-down private museum in a quiet street in London, near Lincolns Inn Fields. Outside stands a STATUE of its Victorian founder, SIR HUGO STORM, a slim, severe gentleman in his thirties with a receding hairline and luxuriant moustache. JOANNE HARDY (26, self-controlled, no-nonsense, Essex) is at the front door, talking on the phone.

JOANNE HARDY

No Shaun, I've paid for this trip, get yourself dressed.

She sneezes, then rings the doorbell.

JOANNE HARDY (CONT'D)

Well Mum isn't around anymore is she? We all have to do things we don't want to -

She sneezes again.

JOANNE HARDY (CONT'D)

Some of us should be in bed poorly, but I've got to work haven't I? If they ever let me in.

She blows her nose, and knocks on the door.

JOANNE HARDY (CONT'D)

Get yourself there on time or it'll be salad for tea.

She turns off her phone, puts it in her pocket, and glares at the door.

She shakes her head and is just about to go when the door creaks open and ARIADNE STORM (38, timid, tiny, caring) peeps round.

ARIADNE STORM
We're closed I'm afraid.

Joanne turns and sneezes again.

ARIADNE STORM (CONT'D)
Bless you. We open at noon -

JOANNE HARDY
Somebody asked for a filing temp?

ARIADNE STORM
Oh, sorry, come in.

Ariadne opens the door - she's wearing rubber gloves, a pinny and holds a feather duster. Joanne steps in.

INT. STORM HOUSE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A large tiled lobby dominated by a full-length PORTRAIT of Sir Hugo Storm. He's cradling what appears to be a PROTOTYPE FIRE EXTINGUISHER in his arms. On either side of the portrait is a door. Various plaques and pictures hang untidily on the walls.

Joanne enters and Ariadne shuts and locks the door behind her.

JOANNE HARDY
Thanks. So when do the staff get here?

ARIADNE STORM
Well, I'm staff -

JOANNE HARDY
I know, but I mean the ... sorry, aren't you the cleaner?

ARIADNE STORM
Why would you think that?

She notices the duster in her hand.

ARIADNE STORM (CONT'D)
Oh I see. No, the plaque -

She indicates a dusty plaque on the wall, dedicated to staff who died in World War One. She flicks the duster at it.

ARIADNE STORM (CONT'D)
I do try and keep things in order.
Ariadne Storm - President of The Storm Trust.

She proffers a hand, notices the rubber glove, takes it off, and she and Joanne shake.

JOANNE HARDY

Sorry, it was the pinny. Joanne Hardy.

ARIADNE STORM

Quite understandable. Well, I suppose before we get you started we ought to -

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON

(O.S., bellowing)

Ariaaaaadne!

ARIADNE STORM

Ah. This will be another member of staff.

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON (42, well-built, imposing, unstoppable) barges into the lobby from the right hand door, like a steam engine entering a library.

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON

Where the merry heck are my blasted keys?

She circuits the room, glaring at objects accusingly, including Joanne.

ARIADNE STORM

Professor Danson, this is -

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON

(to Joanne)

We're closed!

JOANNE HARDY

No, I'm -

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON

Aha!

She finds her keys on a table by the front door.

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON (CONT'D)

Thought so. Now then, Ariadne. Don't forget, if this filing girl ever turns up -

ARIADNE STORM

She's -

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON

- do make sure you show her the induction video this time will you? All right? Good!

She swoops out the way she came. Joanne and Ariadne stand, exhausted.

JOANNE HARDY

Staff?

ARIADNE STORM

Professor Margot Danson, our Chief
Researcher. Quite pleasant, really.
Once you get to know her.

Ariadne looks back in Margot's wake.

JOANNE HARDY

You were saying?

ARIADNE STORM

Ah yes, yes, the induction video.
This way please!

She goes through the door on the left of the portrait.

JOANNE HARDY

There's really no need -

INT. STORM HOUSE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Two small desks sit crowded in by huge filing cabinets, themselves buried beneath towers of paper. Where the walls can be seen there are cupboard doors, and there's a big dusty clock high on one wall. Ariadne clambers over some papers as Joanne follows her in.

JOANNE HARDY

- filing's just ...filing.

She takes in the enormity of the task.

JOANNE HARDY (CONT'D)

However much of it there is.

ARIADNE STORM

Yes, but we do do rather
specialised work here.

She opens one of the cupboards to reveal a very big very old fashioned television.

JOANNE HARDY

My contract's only for a month, I
should probably get on with it.

Ariadne takes hold of the sides of the TV and pulls. Joanne sneezes.

ARIADNE STORM

Bless you.

Ariadne staggers as the TV slides out. Dust billows out. She sneezes.

JOANNE HARDY
Bless you.

DOUG WILTON
(O.S.)
Ariadne?

DOUG WILTON (32, practical, geeky, black Brummie) leans into the room, and is surprised to see Joanne there.

DOUG WILTON (CONT'D)
Sorry love, we're closed. Ariadne -
job on!

He goes. Ariadne, flustered, turns on the TV and fiddles with the old Betamax player on top of it.

ARIADNE STORM
Right, yes - well, you'd better
watch this then, while -

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON
(O.S.)
Ariaaaaaadne!

The TV flickers to life with a countdown timer titled "STORM HOUSE INDUCTION" dated 10/01/1997.

ARIADNE STORM
Here, sorry, Joanne was it?

JOANNE HARDY
Yes, but -

ARIADNE STORM
I've got to go. Just watch this and
I'll be back!

She hands Joanne a remote control, picks up some papers, and runs out.

ARIADNE STORM (CONT'D)
Sorry!

Joanne stands, watching her go, as a cheerful jingle plays and the title screen appears on the video: "WELCOME TO STORM HOUSE!"

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR
Welcome, to Storm House!

INT. STORM HOUSE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Margot and Doug stand waiting impatiently, both putting on backpacks. Ariadne dashes across to the side of the portrait.

ARIADNE STORM

Sorry!

She reaches behind it, almost dropping her papers, and pulls a hidden lever. The painting rises up into the ceiling, revealing a SHAFT CONTAINING THREE FIREMAN'S POLES. Margot and Doug jump onto the first and third pole and slide down. Ariadne goes through the other door and down a spiral staircase.

INT. STORM HOUSE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Margot and Doug land at the bottom of the poles in an underground garage tiled like a London Underground station. They march off down a circular tunnel. As they walk they pass several garage doors, set into the side of the tunnel. They're labelled - "HS0", "BERTHA" and, eventually, just "T"

DOUG WILTON

Can we not use Bertha some time?

Margot tuts and presses a button next to the "T" door.

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON

Not today, Douglas, no.

The door rises to reveal a Model-T Ford, augmented with steam funnels emerging from the bonnet.

EXT. STORM HOUSE - THE 1870S - MONTAGE

Series of sepia photographs taken outside Storm House during its earlier years. It looks much the same as today, but without the statue of Sir Hugo.

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR

(v.o.)

Founded by Sir Hugo Storm in 1872, his "house of unusual interest" has always lived up to its name.

- a younger SIR HUGO STORM stands on the footplate of a "steam buggy", a clunky contraption adapted from a horse carriage with a large barrel at the back and funnels sticking out all over. A small CROWD is gathered around him.

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(v.o.)

Sir Hugo and his team travelled the world, looking out for fascinating treasures to bring home for study.

- Sir Hugo stands on the front steps with a group of DIGNITARIES. He has just pulled the cord and unveiled an Easter Island Head which looms above them.

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(v.o.)

Some of his methods may have fallen out of favour here in the twentieth century, but many of our nation's greatest exhibits arrived with Sir Hugo.

- Sir Hugo poses shaking hands with a nervous looking EGYPTIAN GENTLEMAN, surrounded by a great many SARCOPHAGI.

A mobile phone RINGS.

INT. STORM HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR

Perhaps one of his most unusual, and dangerous, discoveries was a device that has since gone missing -

Joanne is sat slumped in front of the TV screen, which now changes to show an IMAGE of Sir Hugo standing with two other VICTORIAN GENTLEMAN, holding the prototype fire extinguisher. She mutes the sound with a remote control and answers her phone.

JOANNE HARDY

What now?

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

SHAUN HARDY (14, small for his age, spectacled, wary) stands on his own on the pavement outside a school. A coach full of school children is a few feet away.

SHAUN HARDY

I've lost my lunch box. I can't go now.

INT. STORM HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

JOANNE HARDY

Don't be ridiculous Shaun - get one of your new friends to share. Honestly, if you spent a bit less time yakking with your mates and a bit more time paying attention... look, I've paid for the trip, so you're going, all right?

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

SHAUN HARDY

All right, all right. See you tonight. Bye.

He ends the call, sighs, and turns towards the bus. On the back seat a group of BIGGER BOYS bang on the window, waving a lunch box at him. A TEACHER leans out of the bus door.

TEACHER

Hardy! Get a move on!

Shaun trudges to the door. As he passes, other CHILDREN bang on the window, laughing at him.

INT. STORM HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Joanne puts her phone away. She stands and looks at the huge piles of paper, hands on hips.

JOANNE HARDY

Right. Filing's just filing.
However much there is.

She blows her nose and picks up a pile of papers. In the background the silent television shows a close up of the "fire extinguisher" being held at arm's length by Sir Hugo.

INT. STORM HOUSE BASEMENT - DAY

Margot and Doug are sat in the Model T, which is now chugging and vibrating, with steam coming out of the funnels. As they fasten their seatbelts Ariadne dashes in and hands Doug a pile of documents.

ARIADNE STORM

British Museum - Egyptian Room.

DOUG WILTON

Thank you, Ariadne.

Margot pulls a lever and the Model T lurches forward.

Ariadne jumps back as it chugs forward and turns out into the tunnel.

INT. STORM HOUSE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON

Mummies again?

Doug, reading through the pile, tuts and nods.

DOUG WILTON

Yep. Looks like it.

The car reaches a junction, where SIGNS point to various museums. They choose the one that says "BRITISH MUSEUM".

PROFESSOR MARGOT DANSON
How many times do they need to be
told?

She pulls the lever further and the car suddenly zooms ahead into the dark corridor making a terrible racket, sparks flying, smoke billowing.

INT. BRITISH MUSEUM - DAY

Ms Wallace and Mr Biggins are leaned up against huge closed doors, holding back the mummies, who can be heard BANGING against them on the other side. They have placed a cleaner's cart against it to try and hold them back. A crowd of MUSEUM VISITORS gathers round.

MS WALLACE
Sorry everyone, this gallery is now
closed for maintenance.

MR BIGGINS
Maintenance? It's mummies! It's
full of mummies!

MS WALLACE
Yes, thank you. Don't worry
everybody, we have experts on the
way.

MR BIGGINS
What kind of experts can you
possibly have to deal with this?

Margot rises up through the floor via a maintenance panel, riding on top of a manhole cover.