

Legendary "Cursed" Objects

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Entertainment

Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

Podcast Transcript

(Note: transcript consists of episode outline)

This is the second episode in our spooky-season series. Today we're discussing legendary cursed objects. And as always my standard disclaimer for paranormal episodes applies: I don't believe any of this crap. I am a skeptic. But that doesn't mean we can't have fun with it, I'm not a killjoy, we can have nice things. So I fully believe this will be an entertaining episode and I apologize for the occasional cold water throwing or debunking, I can't help myself, but I'll try to keep it to the bare minimum that I can tolerate.

Little Bastard

We'll start with one of the most famous cursed objects of all time, and this one requires some backstory.

Back in 1955, James Dean was a 24-year-old sex symbol and movie star...I am told. I've never seen his films, I

never went through a James Dean phase. It seems like when we were teenagers every high school kid had posters of James Dean on their walls and idealized him, I don't really get it.. I know he was in rebel without a cause, some movie called giant...I think one of the fast and furious films...maybe space jam, or was that Michael Jordan? I always get those two confused. No, his other movie was East of Eden, he only had starring roles in three films before the untimely death that we will discuss shortly. And to put us in the right headspace to talk about James Dean we have to listen to a couple clips of the amazing trailer for east of Eden.

EastEdenTrailer1

Audio Recording · 2.5 MB

"The frankest motion picture ever made." That is some truly old school marketing. I would love to see a movie trailer today that's like "this movie has integrity." "Transformers...the frankest motion picture ever made about alien Shapeshifting robots."

We have to listen to some more

EastEdenTrailer2

Audio Recording · 4.6 MB

"Sparky the dog, as Fido... the fluffiest

dog who ever fluffed."

In addition to being an actor Dean was an aspiring race car driver who had placed in—and even won—a race or two, so it seems he had talent, though some experts and race car enthusiasts beg to differ. Lee Raskin, author of "James Dean on the road to Salinas," wrote, "James Dean grew up as a bit of a daredevil; he wasn't afraid of anything. Was he a great driver? No. First he was seriously myopic, which may explain why he had metal-to-metal contact in every race he was in." I'm no racing expert, but metal to metal contact sounds a lot like a crash. That does seem like a bad sign. If you crash in all of your races and these are not demolition derbies, then yes, you might want to look for a new hobby.

Especially considering the fact that Dean's hobby was unsurprisingly not appreciated by the studios that were trying to keep him physically intact so that he could finish their movies. It seems James Dean was always a thorn in the side of any authority figure he encountered, he was really going all in on that rebel without a cause persona. And there truly was no cause for his rebel-ness...rebelliousness? That the word. when you're rich and young and good looking there's pretty much no reason to be a bratty, angsty mopey bitch. Keep that in mind Rich, hot, wealthy insomniacs. Again, probably not our demographic. But just in case... being mopey and angsty might appeal to the young ladies, but really it's just immaturity and kind of being a

douchebag. Do better.

Anyway, during the filming of "giant" Dean purchased a Porsche 550 spyder and tricked it out, with red stripes above the rear wheels and the words "little bastard" across the rear decklid, which is where the trunk would be in a non-ridiculous car. The spyder did not have a trunk, because it was not a serious grown-up vehicle. Have you seen this thing? It looks like a toy car, it is tiny, a micromachine, like those classic European sports cars it is ridiculously low to the ground, you're surfing the pavement when you ride in this car. It's like the automotive equivalent of going down a slide on a piece of cardboard. You could easily power this Porsche Flintstone-style if your feet went through the floorboards.

There are conflicting stories to account for the car's nickname: little bastard. We're going to go with the one that has been corroborated by at least two people who knew Dean: Phil Stern and Lew Bracker claim that the president of Warner brothers had once called Dean "little bastard" when he stubbornly refused to exit his trailer on the Warner Brothers lot, and so naming his car little bastard and painting the words on the vehicle were his way of sticking it to the man by parking his little bastard on the lot where everyone could see. I know I'm getting older because James Dean annoys the shit out of me and I'm totally siding with a CEO. Get out of the fucking trailer you brat.

So you could say—and many people have—that the car was not beloved by

Dean's friends and acquaintances from the get-go...it supposedly had bad vibes...or instead you might say that the car has been retconned into having bad vibes by people who like to fancy themselves clairvoyant or capitalize on the legend.

A week before Dean's death, British actor Alec Guinness, most famous in later life as Obi-Wan Kenobi, met Dean for the first time when he ran into him outside of a Hollywood restaurant.

Guinness had been denied a table and Dean dashed outside to invite him to join his party. As it happened, the Porsche had just been delivered and was in the parking lot. According to Alec Guinness,

""There in the courtyard of this little restaurant was this little silver thing, very smart, all done up in cellophane with a bunch of roses tied to its bonnet...I said, 'Have you driven it?' and he said, 'No. I have never been in it at all,' And some strange thing came over me. Some almost different voice and I said, 'Look, I won't join your table unless you want me to, but I must say something: Please do not get into that car, because if you do' — and I looked at my watch — and I said, 'if you get into that car at all, it's now Thursday (Friday, actually), 10 o'clock at night and by 10 o'clock at night next Thursday, you'll be dead if you get into that car.'"

I love Alec Guinness, and I'm also calling bullshit. Can you imagine meeting someone for the first time and they show you their new car and the

first thing you say is, "you're going to die in this car." I would not invite that person to my table. Like he absolutely might have felt that nothing good was going to come of a ridiculously fast car driven by an impulsive young man, but he was also very polite and British and I just don't believe that he busted out with that at all. But who knows.

During the filming of "Giant," the studio had forbidden Dean from racing, I believe he was contractually obligated to try his best not to die, kind of a tough contract to enforce if the guy fails... it's like making suicide illegal, which is also something futile and pointless that humans tend to do. But after the movie wrapped Dean was eager to compete in some weekend races in Salinas California, not far from Santa Cruz. The initial plan was for Dean to tow the spider to Salinas, and there are a couple different narratives to explain why he drove it instead. One says that he was advised that he needed to break in the engine a bit before racing it cold, another is that the Porsche was so new that it didn't have enough miles on it to qualify for the race, I didn't know that was a thing, but either way Dean decided to forego the towing and drive the race car to the race. Dean and his Porsche mechanic, a veteran racecar specialist named Rolf Wütherich, left LA on September 30, 1955, headed North on I5 toward Salinas. At 3:30 PM Near Bakersfield CA, Dean was pulled over and given a ticket for speeding by California highway patrol officer Otie V Hunter.

It's so strange to think that if Officer Hunter hadn't pulled him over, Dean would probably be alive today. Although with his shitty eyesight and tendency to crash into other vehicles, maybe it was just a matter of time. Unbeknownst to Dean, coming in the opposite direction was a 1950 Ford Tudor—aka a street-legal tank—being driven by a college student named, and I'm not making this up, Donald Turnupseed. Around 5:45 PM, Turnupseed took an ill-advised left-hand turn across the freeway heading toward Fresno California. There is controversy over how fast Dean was going, somewhere between 60 and 80 miles an hour seems to be the consensus, which honestly isn't a crazy speed even if he were on the high end. I'm sort of surprised it wasn't faster, and also a bit skeptical. We know that Dean and his passenger stopped briefly at a café after the speeding ticket, where Dean reportedly told another racer named Bruce Kessler that he had managed to hit 120 mph on the trip so far. Regardless, by the time of the crash he was going fast enough for the Porsche to flip and cartwheel numerous times; Dean's mechanic, the passenger Rolf Wütherich was ejected and thrown from the convertible, which was really the best case scenario, but Dean's foot was crushed and trapped among the pedals so he himself wasn't thrown clear. At 6.20pm, Dean was pronounced dead on arrival at the Paso Robles War Memorial hospital. Wutherich's injuries were serious and

required medical attention and minor surgery; the Porsche mechanic would suffer from psychological and physical issues for the rest of his life, including depression and alcoholism, and we'll talk about how all of that played out soon.

Turnupseed had only minor injuries, because he was driving a marble slab with wheels, and he was later cleared of any fault in the accident, I'm not sure how (at least if Dean's reported speed was accurate). It seems to have something to do with the fact that Dean's Porsche had been very low profile and thus was hard to see? But it was also silver and shiny on a fully lit day at 5:30 PM in September, I'm not sure how "the other car was short" was an adequate defense. if you're driving the Bigfoot monster car you don't get away with crushing a Toyota just because you were too big to see it. I'm thinking there must've been some recklessness by Dean that was swept under the rug because why tarnish the reputation of a guy who's way too dead to punish.

So little bastard was declared a total loss, and if you see the crash photos, yeah, not salvageable. It doesn't really look like a car, it looks like abstract art.

Even though it was totaled, little bastard was purchased from the salvage yard by a doctor named William Eschrich who yanked out the engine and installed it in his race car, a Lotus IX. He gave the suspension and transmission to his friend and fellow racing enthusiast Troy McHenry. The

two then entered a race, and both of their cars crashed, killing McHenry. The curse of the little bastard entered the Zeitgeist. The little bastard's frame, or what was left of it, was later purchased by self-promoting douchebag and so-called king of Kustomizers George Barris, who initially claimed that he was going to rebuild the vehicle. Which...look, you'd have to melt it down and start over to get this thing to look like a vehicle again. After completing the purchase he quickly admitted that rebuilding the car wasn't an option, and that he instead intended to exploit the wreckage as much as possible for financial benefit. He sold the tires, which promptly blew out, reportedly both at the same time, and the new owner was shocked... shocked I say... that the thing that was most likely to happen happened.

meanwhile Barris tirelessly promoted the idea that the car was cursed, and the wreckage itself went on tour, showing up at bowling alleys and car shows and movie theaters, any establishment tasteless enough to pay to display a crumpled metal coffin. And there has been much speculation indicating that very little of the wreckage was in fact authentic.

"Although the front boot and rear decklid appeared to be original, Raskin theorizes that Barris's car "was cobbled together with sheets of aluminum" and then pummeled with two by fours to make it look like it had been in an accident". Who is doing the pummeling, Paul Bunyan? I don't

understand that at all. Maybe if he used a forklift or something, I don't know. In 1959, while briefly in a storage facility in Fresno, the wreckage mysteriously caught fire, fueling rumors of its malevolence. It was so malevolent that it decided to destroy itself. That's some intense and counterproductive malevolence right there. Also, I'm not sure how "car-wreckage-catching-on-fire is particularly strange or sinister. It seems like people consistently went full surprised Pikachu over the fact that this wrecked vehicle did not function like an intact, un-wrecked vehicle. The fire didn't do much damage, just melted some tires and singed some paint, but it probably did wonders for the publicity tour. One thing I think we'll learn from this episode is that if you're trying to make some money by selling junk, it's way better to sell *haunted* junk than regular junk. Life pro tip. This seems counterintuitive. In general I would like the junk I purchase to not be haunted, so as to not find myself bedeviled by an evil toaster or whatever, but it turns out that a haunted broken toaster is in higher demand than a regular old broken toaster. I'm just saying, Robert the doll ain't worth shit without the backstory. My old sofa couch wasn't worth much when we moved, but if I could convince a few people that it had committed murders, museums would be begging to buy it from me.

There is a long list of supposed spooky activity attributed to the Little Bastard.

Unsubstantiated rumors include an incident in which a thief's arm was mysteriously broken while he was trying to steal the steering wheel ... probably had nothing to do with his treatment by security guards.

"Couldn't have been the armbar submission hold, I swear it was ghosts." From a linked article, "There are other unconfirmed stories of Little Bastard's post-accident life. The car is said to have fallen from its display while on show in Sacramento, breaking the hip of a bystander. The Porsche also reportedly fell on and killed George Barkus, the driver who transported it to a road-safety expo. Finally, the little bastard is rumored to have disappeared from a sealed boxcar in 1960 while en route from Miami to Los Angeles. Some believe that Barris, ever the showman, fabricated that story as a way of keeping the car's mystique alive."

Ya think? So in other words, hauling around a bunch of crumpled up scrap metal that was losing its value and relevance had become a financial liability. The car—it's weird to call it a car because by this point it was really just a hunk of crap—would never be seen again. Its whereabouts are unknown. However, in 2021, TMZ ran the headline "James Dean's 'cursed' transaxle sells for \$400k"

Supposedly, "the original transaxle made its way through several hands before being bought three decades ago by Jack styles, the longtime parts manager at the Paul Russell's renowned restoration shop. Last year,

Styles sold the unit to Porsche broker/collector Don Ahearn who offered it on [The online auction site called 'bring a trailer!'].... winning bidder Zak Bagans described himself as "a pioneer in the paranormal field." He owns the haunted museum in Las Vegas, where one of his prize exhibits is Dr. Jack Kervorkian's so-called 'death van'. The "cursed" transaxle ought to fit right in. It's going to be a freak show" says author and James Dean expert Lee Raskin.

"George Barris must be dancing in his grave."

Quick question, which part of the car was haunted? Did the evil, malevolent spirit reside in the engine, or the transmission, or the transaxle, or the frame? Did the spirit split itself up when the car was disassembled? If you put gas in the car, and then siphon it out, is the gas cursed? Possessed petrol? Is the curse stronger if the gas is high octane? I'm asking the important questions here.

I promise I'd explain what ended up happening to the mechanic who was the sole passenger in Dean's car on the day of the crash. (I guess there would always be a sole passenger, since it was a two seater.) But anyway, Rolf Wütherich has been cited as yet another victim of the little bastard. In the wake of the accident, Wütherich reportedly received threatening letters from James Dean fans who blamed him for the celebrity's death. He also faced a grueling process of recovery from his surgery and injuries. And he handle all

his adversity with a complete lack of grace or courage. In 1969 Wutherich attempted to kill himself and then stabbed his wife, he would be found guilty of manslaughter but due to his psychological issues would be remanded to a mental hospital rather than prison. he eventually died at age 53...in a car crash, when he drunkenly slammed his Honda civic into the wall of a house in the German city of Kupferzell.

The little bastard strikes again. Pretty amazing that a car could motivate a man to stab his wife, while simultaneously also making a ton of money for the guy who exploited it by sending it on a humiliating tour of bowling alleys. It's almost as if this is all a giant coincidence, and somehow there is not a sinister force behind the fact that a bunch of race car enthusiasts ended up dying in race cars. Nah. Haunted Porsche for sure.

And this is why we don't do true crime or paranormal, folks. Because I can't stop myself from throwing cold water on every remotely interesting conspiracy theory.

Robert the doll

Now we're going to turn to perhaps the most influential haunted object that most people have never heard of. Any fan of horror movies is familiar with Chucky, the psychotic ginger doll from the child's play series (a cross between a Cabbage Patch kid and Raggedy Ann and a gremlin), and most of you have

probably heard of Annabelle, but what you might not know is that the entire genre of scary cinematic dolls, puppets, and toys was at least tangentially inspired by a long forgotten relic of the early 1900s, known as Robert the doll. A name btw that sounds like the worst honorific ever; we have "Richard the lionhearted," "Vlad the impaler," "Robert the doll." Sounds like a very patronizing compliment. Robert, you're a doll.

The doll that would eventually be named Robert was created by the original manufacturer of the teddy bear, the German Steiff company. And it wasn't initially a *doll*...by all accounts the life-sized three-foot-tall Robert was created for a window display, possibly intended to portray a preteen jester or clown. Today the doll is extremely dilapidated, but still somewhat recognizable as a young boy wearing a sailor outfit—the costume was added by the eventual owner—honestly this "doll" is more like a rotting mannequin. Robert is covered with pockmarks and what appear almost to be scars, and his mouth has mostly disintegrated. He looks like an embalmed child-corpse that has started to decompose. Cradled in Robert the doll's arms is yet another creepy doll; this is like Russian nesting dolls if Russian nesting dolls were more embracing rather than nesting and also were hideous. The bonus doll is apparently a stuffed dog, though I'll have to take people's word for it, because to me it looks like a bug-eyed,

cracked out sheep. So Robert is kind of a two for one. Creep factor off the charts.

So the doll made its way to America in 1904 when a young boy from Key West Florida named Robert Eugene Otto (who actually went by a variation of his middle name, Gene) received the doll as a birthday gift. The doll would take his first name. Most versions of the story agree that the doll was given to Gene by his wealthy grandfather who had purchased it while on vacation in Germany, though there is an alternate version of the story in which the doll was gifted to Robert by a maid who had been fired by the family for practicing voodoo, and in retaliation she placed a curse on the doll. How about maybe don't accept gifts from anyone who is super mad at your family. If you fire someone, don't open any packages they send or leave on your doorstep. And if she had the ability to curse the doll why not just curse the family? Or whoever fired her? And by the way the fact that the doll was cursed with voodoo does not make Robert a voodoo doll, it's a little confusing, he's just a doll plus voodoo rather than a traditional voodoo doll. Like if you break his legs no one's going to immediately drop to the floor, but you wouldn't want to do that, because Robert is famously vindictive, he can still mess you up pretty bad according to legend. We'll get there. So the story goes that young Gene quickly became obsessed with Robert, carrying him everywhere. He often

blamed the doll for his own mischief, if a lamp was broken, or someone ate the last cookie in the pantry, that was Robert's fault. Which seems pretty standard, kids love a good scapegoat, but the difference in this case is that for some reason people started believing him. The creepiest element of this story might be the fact that full grown adults blindly accepted the ramblings of a delusional child, shades of the Satanic Panic. Believing children never leads anywhere good. The doll would eventually be blamed by many people for causing "car accidents, broken bones, job loss, divorce and a cornucopia of other misfortunes."

Divorce? Dammit haunted dolls, always making me cheat on my wife.

According to legend, some people swore that Robert's expression would change, or that he would mysteriously reposition himself around a room whenever they took their eyes off of him. In one famous version of the origin story, young Gene would often whisper in the doll's ear, which isn't abnormal I guess, but it gets a little weird when someone claimed to have heard the doll whisper back. In a very deep voice. And once again, to be honest I'm much more concerned about the person experiencing auditory hallucinations than I am about the possibility of a haunted doll.

Gene eventually left home for Chicago to attend an art college, which is a great educational strategy if your parents are rich and less great if your future plans involve getting a job or eating regular meals. Luckily his

situation was the former. When he returned to Key West and inherited the family home, Gene created a room in the attic just for Robert, and placed the doll in the attic window, much to the dismay of local children and anyone who has seen the movie psycho or just isn't a fan of creepy ass silhouettes in attic windows.

Honestly anything silhouetted against an attic window is creepy, but especially a tiny sailor clutching a bug-eyed crack sheep.

Gene died in 1974 and the house was purchased by a woman named Myrtle Reuter, who eventually donated Robert to the east Martello Key West Museum in 1994 where it remains on display today and is a popular stop on ghost tours. Many believers in the paranormal claim that you mock Robert at your own risk... There have been reports of bad luck befalling museum goers who insulted or "disrespected" the doll. Now I don't believe in curses but also, how often is this happening, How bad of a day are you having if you have to give an inanimate object a piece of your mind, are people in Florida just flipping off dolls left and right? Is anyone actually paying to go into a museum on a ghost tour and then heckling the exhibits? Reevaluate your hobbies. I don't get it... Are they mad that he's not scary enough? what were you expecting? Actual ghosts? What kind of value proposition are you looking at here, if they could deliver an actual ghost encounter I doubt they'd be charging 10 bucks a ticket.

Next cursed object

The hands resist him

I figured we should throw into this episode a modern viral version of the haunted object trope. Obviously the Internet is the undisputed king of making things weird, or at least making weird things weirder, because this next object was plenty weird to begin with. This is the only one that kind of creeps me out, and it has nothing to do with the paranormal, it's just a creepy ass item. Are you familiar with the painting "the hands resist him? I'll read you the description. "***The Hands Resist Him*** is a painting that was created by artist Bill Stoneham in 1972. It depicts a young boy and a female doll standing in front of a glass paneled door, against which many hands are pressed." The appearance of the boy was based on a photograph of Stoneham himself at age five. He explained that he was inspired by Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, the part of our consciousness that is composed of so-called ancestral memory, essentially the echoes of past lives. Stoneham said, "the hands are 'the other lives.' The glass door, that thin veil between waking and dreaming. The girl/doll is the imagined companion, or guide through this realm."

Ok. I don't know what any of that means, and I don't believe in the paranormal or ghosts or hauntings, but I do believe that some things in this

world probably shouldn't exist, and this painting is one of them. The whole thing just seems wrong. The title of the painting was reportedly inspired by a poem written by Stoneham's first wife, Rhoann Ponseti. I could not locate the original poem and honestly I'm OK with that. I have enough nightmares as it is. According to [grudge.com](https://www.grudge.com), the poem was "based on her husband's experience being adopted and never knowing who his true parents were," and that's the problem with researching supposed paranormal stories, you end up having to quote sites like [grudge.com](https://www.grudge.com) because reputable sites don't deal in these particular tales. I'm a research connoisseur, I enjoy only the finest of researches, I do take this stuff seriously, and that's *another* reason that we aren't a true crime or paranormal podcast, because I'd find myself citing sources like [bloodsoaked-splatterfest.com](https://www.bloodsoaked-splatterfest.com).

The painting was initially displayed in a Stoneham exhibit at the Feingarten gallery, and a one-man art show followed in 1974, at which this painting was the only one purchased. The purchaser was Actor John Marley, whom you might remember from the Godfather as the recipient of an offer he couldn't refuse: this is the guy who woke up with a horse's head in his bed. I don't think he did much after that, kind of tough to break typecasting when you will forever be known as the severed horse head bed guy. But hey, at least he's known for something. I'm the "guy who talks about horse head

bed guy on a podcast guy." Los Angeles Times art critic Henry Seldis reviewed Stoneham's art show, writing, "William Stoneham's paintings are best when at their weirdest." in that case they were definitely at their best. Seldis would reportedly die by suicide four years later, and of course this tragic act has been linked to the painting...he was killed by a painting from a random one-man art show that he reviewed 48 months earlier. Reviewed positively, BTW. If he had been like *that one painting sucks*, maybe I'd be more receptive to this idea. I don't believe in ghosts, but I believe in spite. Numerous deaths would in fact be attributed to the painting, because why not. Humans like to have explanations for senseless death, because it makes death feel avoidable. If we could just do the opposite of whatever those people did we won't end up like them.. If only you hadn't mocked that doll or... seen that painting... newsflash we're all going to die. And also that wouldn't make me feel any better because I see paintings all the time, how am I supposed to avoid the haunted ones? Anyway, Charles Feingarten, proprietor of the art gallery, he died in 1981, and even though I Couldn't find any indication that his death wasn't of natural causes—he seems to have been an old man—the Internet is convinced that his death was also caused by this random painting that briefly hung in his art gallery in which he probably never even saw. Rather than, oh I don't know, angina. I did a little bit of digging into

Feingarten's biography and this passage struck me: (from the "about" page on the Feingarten galleries website) "Chuck Feingarten traveled to Zimbabwe during the civil war to bring back a large shipment of sculptures created by the Tengenenge tribe, a tribe devoted exclusively to making sculpture,...The following year, Chuck and Gail were the recipients of treasures from the region of New Guinean which had been collected by their friends William Holden and Stephanie Powers and were exhibited in Los Angeles with enthusiastic results from the entire art community." so he was plundering third world countries for their art and treasures, a modern day Columbus in the worst possible sense. Getting some serious colonial vibes here. I'd be more inclined to believe that he was cursed by karma or maybe poisoned by a New Guinean than killed by a painting but who knows. The actor who purchased the painting, John Marlee, he died three years later in 1984. So this painting really holds a longterm, delayed reaction grudge, and it's super mad at people who financially supported its creator or liked it enough to buy it...?

So the painting is probably not a murderer, but it is certainly creepy, and more than that it is a master class in effective marketing. We talked about the value of a good story. In February 2000, a listing appeared on eBay titled "haunted painting." it went mildly viral, racking up over 30,000 viewings by the time of the sale. The painting had been

listed by an elderly California couple who supposedly found it at an abandoned brewery. From the eBay listing:

"When we received this painting, we thought it was really good art...At the time we wondered a little why a seemingly perfectly fine painting would be discarded like that (today we don't!). One morning our four and a half year-old daughter claimed that the children in the picture were fighting and coming into the room during the night."

Well if a 4 1/2-year-old said it, it must be true.

The couple selling the painting additionally claimed that they had set up a motion-triggered camera and had captured images of the boy crawling out of the painting. I couldn't find any of these pictures but I'm sure they are absolute masterpieces and if you can locate them please post them in the Discord. From an article in vintage news daily, "Also included with the listing were a series of photographs that were said to be evidence of an incident in which the female doll character threatened the male character with a gun that she was holding, causing him to attempt to leave the painting."

Hell yeah. Badass gunwielding doll does not like to share, "this painting isn't big enough for the both of us." "According to the artist, the object presumed by the eBay sellers to be a

gun is actually nothing more than a dry cell battery and a tangle of wires."

And by the way, from that same article, and also the Wikipedia article for this painting, "Stoneham recalls that both the owner of the gallery in which the painting was first displayed, and the art critic who reviewed it, died within one year of coming into contact with the painting."

Neither of those things are true, so again, buyer beware when it comes to paranormal stories guys. I'm doing my best here but just take every ghost story with a grain of salt, that's all I'm saying. "

Back to the eBay listing. Brilliantly, there was a stipulation for the purchaser: anyone buying the painting would have to sign a release of liability indicating that they understood they were getting a haunted painting and would not be able to sue the old couple after they were murdered or whatever. This was genius. Although it's funny because the only person who's going to sign something like that is me, who doesn't believe in the curse, anyone who actually wants this curse object and believes in it is not going to buy it unless they have a death wish.

But someone eventually did. The painting had been listed at \$199 but eventually shot up to over 1000. it would finally sell for 1025, or 1050 depending on the article you read.

That should have been the end of it, but the media likes a good narrative.

Articles by the BBC and the daily dot kept the legend alive. 4Chan trolls and various creepy pasta sites contributed as well, and of course paranormal podcasts were all over this one. Podcasters love creepy stories because they get a lot of downloads, and Things just got very meta up in here. There has been at least one book based on a dramatized version of the painting's creation, called, "the hands resist him: be careful what you wish for." It was written by one DK O'Neil, who also claims to have experienced the power of the painting firsthand. "I first saw it online when I was living in Dubai. I printed it out and left it on a side table next to some other documents printed on the same printer with the same paper. Anyway, I went to Italy for a month. When I came back, the air conditioning had gone awry, everything was green mold. The TV, bed sheets, my daughter's cot and clothing, all of my suits in the closet, and the documents I had printed all green. But right next to them, the only thing that was perfectly untouched was the printout of the painting." so the painting's curse includes antifungal properties? Terrifying. Can you curse my mitchen, please.

"Many people experienced unexplained physical sensations after viewing the haunted painting. One eBay buyer claimed that "he fainted at the sight of the painting" while another "said she felt like her throat was being tightened by an external grip." A buyer said that

his monitor went white and emitted a blast of heat as soon as he looked at the painting. He also started crying for no reason. Someone heard an Exorcist-type voice, and another reported a "new Epson printer that ate and mutilated page after page when the user tried to download images of the painting." Sorry to break this to you, that is not abnormal. Or I've had upwards of 30 cursed printers in my life. I'm not sure I've ever had a printer that wasn't cursed, in that case.

Viewers also mentioned difficulty breathing, becoming ill, or general discomfort, while some parents said their children grew unruly and started to scream at the sight of the painting. Jupiknight wrote on Reddit on August 23, "I still refuse to look at/study this picture more than like, 5 seconds...It creeps me the f--k out." In reply, snoos_my_dog added, "I actually purchased a print of this painting from his website. I put it on display in my living room and man, that thing made everyone who saw it uncomfortable... People actually would stop coming over because of it. I ended up taking it down due to popular demand." Yeah, why the hell would you post a picture of a five-year-old kid and a doll being accosted by ghost hands on your freaking wall. Anyway, so.

So, case closed. Haunted painting. Snooze my dog and a four-year-old have spoken. And an author who is profiting from the sensationalism of the legend.

The artist himself decided to capitalize on the viral sensation and painted a few follow ups. Resistance at the threshold is essentially the same painting but the young boy is now 40 years older and the doll is either levitating or hanging and her doll-face is being pulled off by one of the hands coming through the glass door. There also appears to be giant wasps attacking the middle-aged man, and why wouldn't there be? The next painting in the series is called threshold of revelation, with the now old man coaxing a fish out of some type of pool while a young girl stands nearby holding what appears to be the doll face... I don't know man. Google it. There's also a prequel, because why not milk it a little bit more, this one is called "the hands invent him" and shows a young boy on the other side of the glass door with a paintbrush, and a boy and doll are silhouetted on the outside, I'm trying my best here, there are again some bugs involved, and then the final entry in the series, at least until this guy needs vacation money or whatever, "what remains" which depicts... I have no idea. some feet dangling in a grave with a skull at the bottom, that's my best guess. From Wikipedia "*What Remains*[5] depicts the original painting's setting as deteriorated and scattered with the detritus of earlier lives and stories." It definitely does not. But whatever. This was fun but I'm done with this episode.

We have a new menace!

New \$5.00 patron! 🎉 Meet Chris Pewitt

PATREON



Chris Pewitt just became a \$5.00 patron!

Email: completelylost@charter.net

We have a new minion!

New \$3.00 member! 🎉 Meet Tiffany



Tiffany just became a \$3.00 member!

Email: xtiffanyx@proton.me

New £3.00 member! 🎉 Meet Lucy coffin



Lucy coffin just became a £3.00 member!

Email: lucycoffin0808@outlook.com

**New \$3.00 member! 🎉 Meet
Macks-I-Mise**



Macks-I-Mise just became a \$3.00 member!

Email: mackneal40@gmail.com

**New \$3.00 member! 🎉 Meet
Krystal McKee**



Krystal McKee just became a \$3.00 member!

Email: mckeekrystal94@gmail.com

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