



PIGGY STORY STUDIO
ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS

Witnessed by Two

Mary Louisa Molesworth

Two people saw him. But he was thousands of miles away.



READ | LISTEN | IMAGINE

An illustrated reader edition



Witnessed by Two

by Mary Louisa Molesworth



SCAN TO LISTEN

Complete illustrated audiobook

PIGGY STORY STUDIO

Two people saw him. But he was thousands of miles away.

About This Edition

This illustrated reader edition pairs the complete public-domain story with selected images from the Piggy Story Studio video production. The original story wording is preserved. Where the original story has no formal chapters, editorial section headings and breaks have been added only to improve navigation.

From *Four Ghost Stories* (1888), Project Gutenberg eBook #31019.

Illustrations and layout: Piggy Story Studio. Visuals are AI-assisted original artwork created and edited for this production.



SCAN TO VISIT THE CHANNEL

More illustrated classics and mysteries

PIGGY STORY STUDIO

PDF permission note: printing is allowed; document modification is restricted. QR codes remain usable even when a PDF reader blocks external links.

Contents

Character Portraits & Introductions

Setting Guide

01. A Farewell

02. The Apparition

03. The Death Notice and the Letter

04. The Return and Explanation

Reader Appendix

Continue Listening



SCAN TO LISTEN

Complete illustrated audiobook

PIGGY STORY STUDIO

Character Portraits

Meet the principal characters before entering the story. Each portrait is drawn from the same fixed visual reference used throughout the illustrated audiobook, so faces and ages remain consistent.

The notes below introduce roles and relationships without revealing the ending.

PORTRAIT 01



Anne Medway

A young widow and the first witness

CHARACTER 01

Anne Medway

A young widow and the first witness

In her early thirties, refined and self-controlled. Anne's private attachment to Kenneth Graham makes the apparition intimate, while her careful silence protects the story from easy melodrama.

VISUAL CONTINUITY NOTE

Costume and lighting may change with time and circumstance, but this is the fixed face used for the character throughout the illustrated production.

PORTRAIT 02



Major Kenneth Graham

An army officer returning to India

CHARACTER 02

Major Kenneth Graham

An army officer returning to India

A reserved man in his late thirties. His farewell to Anne appears final--until his unmistakable figure is seen inside her London house while he should be far away at sea.

VISUAL CONTINUITY NOTE

Costume and lighting may change with time and circumstance, but this is the fixed face used for the character throughout the illustrated production.

PORTRAIT 03



Ambrose

Anne's loyal manservant and the second witness

CHARACTER 03

Ambrose

Anne's loyal manservant and the second witness

An older servant whose independent sighting gives the story its title. His practical reaction and precise testimony confirm that Anne was not alone in what she saw.

VISUAL CONTINUITY NOTE

Costume and lighting may change with time and circumstance, but this is the fixed face used for the character throughout the illustrated production.

PORTRAIT 04



Seton

Anne's sensible maid

CHARACTER 04

Seton

Anne's sensible maid

A steady household presence who helps us read Anne's emotional state and the ordinary rhythm of the house against which the impossible event occurs.

VISUAL CONTINUITY NOTE

Costume and lighting may change with time and circumstance, but this is the fixed face used for the character throughout the illustrated production.

Setting Guide

These recurring places form the story's geography. Reading them first makes later movements, entrances and discoveries easier to follow.



Anne's London Townhouse

A prosperous, well-run home in which ordinary servants and routines provide reliable witnesses.

The Library

The firelit room where Kenneth says farewell and where his figure later returns.

The Entrance Hall and Stair

Ambrose's line of sight makes the second sighting independent of Anne's.

The Ariadne

The troopship carrying Kenneth eastward, placing an ocean between the man and the London apparition.

CHAPTER 01

A Farewell

**SCAN TO LISTEN**

Chapter starts at 0:05

PIGGY STORY STUDIO



"But to-morrow--to-morrow you will keep for me. I may expect you at the usual time?" said young Mrs. Medway to her old friend Major Graham, as she shook hands with him.

"To-morrow? Certainly. I have kept it for you, Anne. I always said I should," he answered. There was a slight touch of reproach in his tone.

She lifted her eyes for half a second to his face as if she would have said more. But after all it was only the words, "Good-bye, then, till to-morrow," that were uttered, quietly and almost coldly, as Major Graham left the room.

"I can't quite make Anne out sometimes," he said to himself. "She is surely very cold. And yet I know she has real affection for me--sisterly affection, I suppose. Ah, well! so much the better. But still, just when a fellow's off for heaven knows how long, and--and--altogether it does seem a little overstrained. She can't but know what might have come to pass had we not been separated for so long--or had I been richer; and I don't think she could have been exactly in love with Medway, though by all accounts he was a very decent fellow. She is so inconsistent too--she seemed really disappointed when I said I couldn't stay to-day. But I'm a fool to think so much about her. I am as poor as ever and she is rich. A fatal barrier! It's a good thing that she is cold, and that I have plenty of other matters to think about."

And thus congratulating himself he dismissed, or believed that he dismissed for the time being, all thought of Anne Medway from his mind. It was true that he had plenty of other things to occupy it with, for the day after to-morrow was to see his departure from England for an indefinite period.

Mrs. Medway meantime sat sadly and silently in the library where Major Graham had left her. Her sweet gray eyes were fixed on the fire burning brightly and cheerfully in the waning afternoon light, but she saw nothing about her. Her thoughts were busily travelling along a road which had grown very familiar to them of late: she was recalling all her past intercourse with Kenneth Graham since the time when, as boy and girl, they had scarcely remembered that they were not "real" brother and sister--all through the pleasant years of frequent meeting and unconstrained companionship to the melancholy day when Kenneth was ordered to India, and they bade each other a long farewell! That was ten years ago now, and they had not met again till last spring, when Major Graham returned to find his old playfellow a widow, young, rich, and lovely, but lonely in a sense--save that she had two children--for she was without near relations, and was not the type of woman to make quick or numerous friendships.

The renewal of the old relations had been very pleasant--only too pleasant, Anne had of late begun to think. For the news of Kenneth's having decided to go abroad again had made her realise all he had become to her, and the discovery brought with it sharp misgiving, and even humiliation.

"He does not care for me--not as I do for him," she was saying to herself as she sat by the fire. "There would have been no necessity for his leaving England again

had he done so. It cannot be because I am rich and he poor, surely? He is not the sort of man to let such a mere accident as that stand in the way if he really cared for me. No, it is that he does not care for me except as a sort of sister. But still--he said he had kept his last evening for me--at least he cares for no one else more, and that is something. Who knows--perhaps to-morrow--when it comes to really saying good-bye----?" and a faint flush of renewed hope rose to her cheeks and a brighter gleam to her eyes.

The door opened, and a gray-haired man-servant came in gently.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," he said apologetically; "I was not sure if Major Graham had gone. Will he be here to dinner, if you please?"

"Not to-night, Ambrose. I shall be quite alone. But Major Graham will dine here to-morrow; he does not leave till Thursday morning."

"Very well, ma'am," said Ambrose, as he discreetly retired.

He had been many years in the Medway household. He had respected his late master, but for his young mistress he had actual affection, and being of a somewhat sentimental turn, he had constructed for her benefit a very pretty little romance of which Major Graham was the hero. It had been a real blow to poor Ambrose to learn that the gentleman in question was on the eve of his departure without any sign of a satisfactory third volume, and he was rather surprised to see that Mrs. Medway seemed this evening in better spirits than for some time past.

"It's maybe understood between themselves," he reflected, as he made his way back to his own quarters. "I'm sure I hope so, for he's a real gentleman and she's as sweet a lady as ever stepped, which I should know if any one should, having seen her patience with poor master as was really called for through his long illness. She deserves a happy ending, and I'm sure I hope she may have it, poor lady."

"To-morrow at the usual time," meaning five o'clock or thereabouts, brought Kenneth for his last visit. Anne had been expecting him with an anxiety she was almost ashamed to own to herself, yet her manner was so calm and collected that no one could have guessed the tumult of hope and fear, of wild grief at his leaving, of intense longing for any word--were it but a word--to prove that all was not on her side only.

"I could bear his being away--for years even, if he thought it must be--if I could but look forward--if I had the right to look forward to his return," she said to herself.

But the evening passed on tranquilly, and to all appearance pleasantly, without a word or look more than might have been between real brother and sister. Kenneth talked kindly--tenderly even--of the past; repeated more than once the pleasure it had been to him to find again his old friend so little changed, so completely his old friend still. The boys came in to say good-night, and "good-bye, alas! my lads," added their tall friend with a sigh. "Don't forget me quite, Hal and Charlie, and don't let your mother forget me either, eh?" To which the little fellows replied solemnly, though hardly understanding why he patted their curly heads with a lingering hand this evening, or why mamma looked grave at his words.

And Anne bore it all without flinching, and smiled and talked a little more than usual perhaps, though all the time her heart was bursting, and Kenneth wondered more than ever if, after all, she had "much heart or feeling to speak of."

"You will be bringing back a wife with you perhaps," she said once. "Shall you tell her about your sister Anne, Kenneth?"

Major Graham looked at her earnestly for half an instant before he replied, but Anne's eyes were not turned towards him, and she did not see the look. And his words almost belied it.

"Certainly I shall tell her of you," he said, "that is to say, if she ever comes to exist. At present few things are less probable. Still I am old enough now never to say, 'Fontaine, je ne boirai jamais de ton eau.' But," he went on, "I may return to find you married again, Anne. You are still so young and you are rather lonely."

"No," said Anne with a sudden fierceness which he had never seen in her before, "I shall never marry again--never," and she looked him full in the face with a strange sparkle in her eyes which almost frightened him.

"I beg your pardon," he said meekly. And though the momentary excitement faded as quickly as it had come, and Anne, murmuring some half-intelligible excuse, was again her quiet self, this momentary glimpse of a fierier nature beneath gave him food for reflection.

"Can Medway have not been what he seemed on the surface, after all?" he thought to himself. "What can make her so vindictive against matrimony?"

But it was growing late, and Kenneth had still some last preparations to make. He rose slowly and reluctantly from his chair.

"I must be going, I fear," he said.

Anne too had risen. They stood together on the hearthrug. A slight, very slight shiver passed through her. Kenneth perceived it.

"You have caught cold, I fear," he said kindly; for the room was warm and the fire was burning brightly.

"No, I don't think so," she said indifferently.

"You will write to me now and then?" he said next.

"Oh, certainly--not very often perhaps," she replied lightly, "but now and then. Stay," and she turned away towards her writing-table, "tell me exactly how to address you. Your name--is your surname enough?--there is no other Graham in your regiment?"

"No," he said absently, "I suppose not. Yes, just my name and the regiment and Allagherry, which will be our headquarters. You might, if you were very amiable--you might write to Galles--a letter overland would wait for me there," for it was the days of "long sea" for all troops to India.

Anne returned to her former position on the hearthrug--the moment at the table had restored her courage. "We shall see," she said, smiling again.

Then Kenneth said once more, "I must go;" but he lingered still a moment.

"You must have caught cold, Anne, or else you are very tired. You are so white," and from his height above her, though Anne herself was tall, he laid his hand on her shoulder gently and as a brother might have done, and looked down at her pale face half inquiringly. A flush of colour rose for an instant to her cheeks. The temptation was strong upon her to throw off that calmly caressing hand, but she resisted it, and looked up bravely with a light almost of defiance in her eyes.

"I am perfectly well, I assure you. But perhaps I am a little tired. I suppose it is getting late."

And Kenneth stifled a sigh of scarcely realised disappointment, and quickly drew back his hand.

"Yes, it is late. I am very thoughtless. Good-bye then, Anne. God bless you."

And before she had time to answer he was gone.

Ambrose met him in the hall, with well-meaning officiousness bringing forward his coat and hat. His presence helped to dissipate an impulse which seized Major Graham to rush upstairs again for one other word of farewell. Had he done so what would he have found? Anne sobbing--sobbing with the terrible intensity of a self-contained nature once the strain is withdrawn--sobbing in the bitterness of her grief and the cruelty of her mortification, with but one consolation.

"At least he does not despise me. I hid it well," she whispered to herself.

And Kenneth Graham, as he drove away in his cab, repeated to himself, "She is so cold, this evening particularly. And yet, can it be that it was to hide any other feeling? If I thought so--good God!" and he half started up as if to call to the driver, but sat down again. "No, no, I must not be a fool. I could not stand a repulse from her--I could never see her again. Better not risk it. And then I am so poor!"

And in the bustle and hurry of his departure he tried to forget the wild fancy which for a moment had disturbed him. He sailed the next day.

CHAPTER 02

The Apparition

**SCAN TO LISTEN**

Chapter starts at 13:34

PIGGY STORY STUDIO



But the few weeks which followed passed heavily for Anne. It was a dead time of year--there was no special necessity for her exerting herself to throw off the overwhelming depression, and strong and brave as she was, she allowed herself, to some extent, to yield to it.

"If only he had not come back--if I had never seen him again!" she repeated to herself incessantly. "I had in a sense forgotten him--the thought of him never troubled me all the years of my marriage. I suppose I had never before understood how I could care. How I wish I had never learnt it! How I wish he had never come back!"

It was above all in the afternoons--the dull, early dark, autumn afternoons--which for some weeks had been enlivened by the expectation, sure two or three times a week to be fulfilled, of Major Graham's "dropping in"--that the aching pain, the weary longing, grew so bad as to be well-nigh intolerable.

"How shall I bear it?" said poor Anne to herself sometimes; "it is so wrong, so unwomanly! So selfish, too, when I think of my children. How much I have to be thankful for--why should I ruin my life by crying for the one thing that is not for me? It is worse, far worse than if he had died; had I known that he had loved me, I could have borne his death, it seems to me."

She was sitting alone one afternoon about five weeks after Kenneth had left, thinking sadly over and over the same thoughts, when a tap at the door made her look up.

"Come in," she said, though the tap hardly sounded like that of her maid, and no one else was likely to come to the door of her own room where she happened to be. "Come in," and somewhat to her surprise the door half opened and old Ambrose's voice replied--

"If you please, ma'am----" then stopped and hesitated.

"Come in," she repeated with a touch of impatience. "What is it, Ambrose? Where is Seton?"

"If you please, ma'am, I couldn't find her--that is to say," Ambrose went on nervously, "I didn't look for her. I thought, ma'am, I would rather tell you myself. You mustn't be startled, ma'am," and Anne at this looking up at the old man saw that he was pale and startled-looking himself, "but it's--it's Major Graham."

"Major Graham?" repeated Anne, and to herself her voice sounded almost like a scream. "What about him? Have you heard anything?"

"It's him, ma'am--him himself!" said Ambrose. "He's in the library. I'm a little afraid, ma'am, there may be something wrong--he looked so strange and he did not answer when I spoke to him. But he's in the library, ma'am."

Anne did not wait to hear more. She rushed past Ambrose, across the landing, and down the two flights of steps which led to the library--a half-way house room,

between the ground-floor and the drawing-room--almost before his voice had stopped. At the door she hesitated a moment, and in that moment all sorts of wild suppositions flashed across her brain. What was it? What was she going to hear? Had Kenneth turned back half-way out to India for her sake? Had some trouble befallen him, in which he had come to seek her sympathy? What could it be? and her heart beating so as almost to suffocate her, she opened the door.

Yes--there he stood--on the hearthrug as she had last seen him in that room. But he did not seem to hear her come in, for he made no movement towards her; he did not even turn his head in her direction.

More and more startled and perturbed, Anne hastily went up to him.

"Kenneth," she cried, "what is it? What is the matter?"

She had held out her hand as she hurried towards him, but he did not seem to see it. He stood there still, without moving--his face slightly turned away, till she was close beside him.

"Kenneth," she repeated, this time with a thrill of something very like anguish in her tone, "what is the matter? Are you angry with me? Kenneth--speak."

Then at last he slowly turned his head and looked at her with a strange, half-wistful anxiety in his eyes--he gazed at her as if his very soul were in that gaze, and lifting his right hand, gently laid it on her shoulder as he had done the evening he had bidden her farewell. She did not shrink from his touch, but strange to say, she did not feel it, and some indefinable instinct made her turn her eyes away from his and glance at her shoulder. But even as she did so she saw that his hand was no longer there, and with a thrill of fear she exclaimed again, "Speak, Kenneth, speak to me!"

The words fell on empty air. There was no Kenneth beside her. She was standing on the hearthrug alone.

Then, for the first time, there came over her that awful chill of terror so often described, yet so indescribable to all but the few who have felt it for themselves. With a terrible though half-stifled cry, Anne turned towards the door. It opened before she reached it, and she half fell into old Ambrose's arms. Fortunately for

her--for her reason, perhaps--his vague misgiving had made him follow her, though of what he was afraid he could scarcely have told.

"Oh, ma'am--oh, my poor lady!" he exclaimed, as he half led, half carried her back to her own room, "what is it? Has he gone? But how could he have gone? I was close by--I never saw him pass."

"He is not there--he has not been there," said poor Anne, trembling and clinging to her old servant. "Oh, Ambrose, what you and I have seen was no living Kenneth Graham--no living man at all. Ambrose--he came thus to say good-bye to me. He is dead," and the tears burst forth as she spoke, and Anne sobbed convulsively.

Ambrose looked at her in distress and consternation past words. Then at last he found courage to speak.

"My poor lady," he repeated. "It must be so. I misdoubted me and I did not know why. He did not ring, but I was passing by the door and something--a sort of feeling that there was some one waiting outside--made me open it. To my astonishment it was he," and Ambrose himself could not repress a sort of tremor. "He did not speak, but seemed to pass me and be up the stairs and in the library in an instant. And then, not knowing what to do, I went to your room, ma'am. Forgive me if I did wrong."

"No, no," said Anne, "you could not have done otherwise. Ring the bell, Ambrose; tell Seton I have had bad news, and that you think it has upset me. But wait at the door till she comes. I--I am afraid to be left alone."

And Mrs. Medway looked so deadly pale and faint, that when Seton came hurrying in answer to the sharply-rung bell, it needed no explanation for her to see that Mrs. Medway was really ill. Seton was a practical, matter-of-fact person, and the bustle of attending to her mistress, trying to make her warm again--for Anne was shivering with cold--and persuading her to take some restoratives, effectually drove any inquiry as to the cause of the sudden seizure out of the maid's head. And by the time Mrs. Medway was better, Seton had invented a satisfactory explanation of it all, for herself.

"You need a change, ma'am. It's too dull for anybody staying in town at this season; and it's beginning to tell on your nerves, ma'am," was the maid's idea.

CHAPTER 03

The Death Notice and the Letter

**SCAN TO LISTEN**

Chapter starts at 22:23

PIGGY STORY STUDIO



And some little time after the strange occurrence Mrs. Medway was persuaded to leave town for the country.

But not till she had seen in the newspapers the fatal paragraph she knew would sooner or later be there--the announcement of the death, on board Her Majesty's troopship *Ariadne* a few days before reaching the Cape, of "Major R. R. Graham," of the 113th regiment.

She "had known it," she said to herself; yet when she saw it there, staring her in the face, she realised that she had been living in a hope which she had not allowed to herself that the apparition might in the end prove capable of other explanation. She would gladly have taken refuge in the thought that it was a dream, an optical

delusion fed of her fancy incessantly brooding on her friend and on his last visit--that her brain was in some way disarranged or disturbed--anything, anything would have been welcome to her. But against all such was opposed the fact that it was not herself alone who had seen Kenneth Graham that fatal afternoon.

And now, when the worst was certain, she recognised this still more clearly as the strongest testimony to the apparition not having been the product of her own imagination. And old Ambrose, her sole confidant, in his simple way agreed with her.

"If I had not seen him too, ma'am, or if I alone had seen him," he said, furtively wiping his eyes. "But the two of us. No, it could have but the one meaning," and he looked sadly at the open newspaper. "There's a slight discrepancy, ma'am," he said as he pointed to the paragraph. "Our Major Graham's name was 'K. R.' not 'R. R.'"

"It is only a misprint. I noticed that," said Anne wearily. "No, Ambrose, there can be no mistake. But I do not want any one--not any one--ever to hear the story. You will promise me that, Ambrose?" and the old man repeated the promise he had already given.

There was another "discrepancy" which had struck Anne more forcibly, but which she refrained from mentioning to Ambrose.

"It can mean nothing; it is no use putting it into his head," she said to herself. "Still, it is strange."

The facts were these. The newspaper gave the date of Major Graham's death as the 25th November--the afternoon on which he had appeared to Mrs. Medway and her servant was that of the 26th. This left no possibility of calculating that the vision had occurred at or even shortly after the moment of the death.

"It must be a mistake in the announcement," Anne decided. And then she gave herself up to the acceptance of the fact. Kenneth was dead. Life held no individual future for her any more--nothing to look forward to, no hopes, however tremblingly admitted, that "some day" he might return, and return to discover--to own, perhaps, to himself and to her that he did love her, and that only mistaken

pride, or her own coldness, or one of the hundred "mistakes" or "perhapses" by which men, so much more than women, allow to drift away from them the happiness they might grasp, had misled and withheld him! No; all was over. Henceforth she must live in her children alone--in the interests of others she must find her happiness.

"And in one blessed thought," said the poor girl--for she was little more--even at the first to herself; "that after all he did love me, that I may, without shame, say so in my heart, for I was his last thought. It was--it must have been--to tell me so that he came that day. My Kenneth--yes, he was mine after all."

Some little time passed. In the quiet country place whither, sorely against Seton's desires, Mrs. Medway had betaken herself for "change," she heard no mention of Major Graham's death. One or two friends casually alluded to it in their letters as "very sad," but that was all. And Anne was glad of it.

"I must brace myself to hear it spoken of and discussed by the friends who knew him well--who knew how well I knew him"--she reflected. "But I am glad to escape it for a while."

It was February already, more than three months since Kenneth Graham had left England, when one morning--among letters forwarded from her London address--came a thin foreign paper one with the traces of travel upon it--of which the superscription made Anne start and then turn pale and cold.

"I did not think of this," she said to herself. "He must have left it to be forwarded to me. It is terrible--getting a letter after the hand that wrote it has been long dead and cold."

With trembling fingers she opened it.

"My dear--may I say my dearest Anne," were the first words that her eyes fell on. Her own filled with tears. Wiping them away before going on to read more, she caught sight of the date. "On board H.M.'s troopship Ariadne, 27th November."

Anne started. Stranger and stranger. Two days later than the reported date of his death--and the writing so strong and clear. No sign of weakness or illness even! She read on with frantic eagerness; it was not a very long letter, but when Anne

had read the two or three somewhat hurriedly written pages, her face had changed as if from careworn, pallid middle age, back to fresh, sunny youth. She fell on her knees in fervent, unspoken thanksgiving. She kissed the letter--the dear, beautiful letter, as if it were a living thing!

"It is too much--too much," she said. "What have I done to deserve such blessedness?"

This was what the letter told. The officer whose death had been announced was not "our Major Graham," not Graham of the 113th at all, but an officer belonging to another regiment who had come on board at Madeira to return to India, believing his health to be quite restored. "The doctors had in some way mistaken his case," wrote Kenneth, "for he broke down again quite suddenly and died two days ago. He was a very good fellow, and we have all been very cut up about it. He took a fancy to me, and I have been up some nights with him, and I am rather done up myself. I write this to post at the Cape, for a fear has struck me that--his initials being so like mine--some report may reach you that it is I, not he. Would you care very much, dear Anne? I dare to think you would--but I cannot in a letter tell you why. I must wait till I see you. I have had a somewhat strange experience, and it is possible, just possible, that I may be able to tell you all about it, *vivâ voce*, sooner than I had any idea of when I last saw you. In the meantime, good-bye and God bless you, my dear child."

Then followed a postscript--of some days' later date, written in great perturbation of spirit at finding that the letter had, by mistake, not been posted at the Cape. "After all my anxiety that you should see it as soon as or before the newspapers, it is really too bad. I cannot understand how it happened. I suppose it was that I was so busy getting poor Graham's papers and things together to send on shore, that I overlooked it. It cannot now be posted till we get to Galles."

That was all. But was it not enough, and more than enough? The next few weeks passed for Anne Medway like a happy dream. She was content now to wait--years even--she had recovered faith in herself, faith in the future.

The next Indian mail brought her no letter, somewhat to her surprise. She wondered what had made Kenneth allude to his perhaps seeing her again before long--she wondered almost more, what was the "strange experience" to which he

referred. Could it have had any connection with her most strange experience that November afternoon? And thus "wondering" she was sitting alone--in her own house again by this time--one evening towards the end of April, when a ring at the bell made her look up from the book she was reading, half dreamily asking herself what visitor could be coming so late. She heard steps and voices--a door shutting--then Ambrose opened that of the drawing-room where she was sitting and came up to her, his wrinkled old face all flushed and beaming.

CHAPTER 04

The Return and Explanation

**SCAN TO LISTEN**

Chapter starts at 32:14

PIGGY STORY STUDIO



"It was me that frightened you so that day, ma'am," he began. "It's right it should be me again. But it's himself--his very own self this time. You may believe me, indeed."

Anne started to her feet. She felt herself growing pale--she trembled so that she could scarcely stand.

"Where is he?" she said. "You have not put him into the library--anywhere but there?"

"He would have it so, ma'am. He said he would explain to you. Oh, go to him, ma'am--you'll see it'll be all right."

Anne made her way to the library. But at the door a strange tremor seized her. She could scarcely control herself to open it. Yes--there again on the hearthrug stood the tall figure she had so often pictured thus to herself. She trembled and all but fell, but his voice--his own hearty, living voice--speaking to her in accents tenderer and deeper than ever heretofore--reassured her, and dispersed at once the fear that had hovered about her.

"Anne, my dear Anne. It is I myself. Don't look so frightened;" and in a moment he had led her forward, and stood with his hand on her shoulder, looking with his kind, earnest eyes into hers.

"Yes," he said dreamily, "it was just thus. Oh, how often I have thought of this moment! Anne, if I am mistaken forgive my presumption, but I can't think I am. Anne, my darling, you do love me?"

There was no need of words. Anne hid her face on his shoulder for one happy moment. Then amidst the tears that would come she told him all--all she had suffered and hoped and feared--her love and her agony of humiliation when she thought it was not returned--her terrible grief when she thought him dead; and yet the consolation of believing herself to have been his last thought in life.

"So you shall be--my first and my last," he answered. "My Anne--my very own."

And then she told him more of the strange story we know. He listened with intense eagerness, but without testifying much surprise, far less incredulity.

"I anticipated something of the kind," he said, after a moment or two of silence. "It is very strange. Listen, Anne: at the time, the exact time, so far as I can roughly calculate, at which you thought you saw me, I was dreaming of you. It was between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, was it not?"

Anne bowed her head in assent.

"That would have made it about six o'clock where we then were," he went on consideringly. "Yes; it was about seven when I awoke. I had lain down that afternoon with a frightful headache. Poor Graham had died shortly before midnight the night before, and I had not been able to sleep, though I was very tired. I daresay I was not altogether in what the doctors call a normal condition,

from the physical fatigue and the effect generally of having watched him die. I was feeling less earthly, if you can understand, than one usually does. It is--to me at least--impossible to watch a deathbed without wondering about it all--about what comes after--intensely. And Graham was so good, so patient and resigned and trustful, though it was awfully hard for him to die. He had every reason to wish to live. Well, Anne, when I fell asleep that afternoon I at once began dreaming about you. I had been thinking about you a great deal, constantly almost, ever since we set sail. For, just before starting, I had got a hint that this appointment--I have not told you about it yet, but that will keep; I have accepted it, as you see by my being here--I got a hint that it would probably be offered me, and that if I didn't mind paying my passage back almost as soon as I got out, I had better make up my mind to accept it. I felt that it hung upon you, and yet I did not see how to find out what you would say without--without risking what I had--your sisterly friendship. It came into my head just as I was falling asleep that I would write to you from the Cape, and tell you of Graham's death to avoid any mistaken report, and that I might in my letter somehow feel my way a little. This was all in my mind, and as I fell asleep it got confused so that I did not know afterwards clearly where to separate it from my dream."

"And what was the dream?" asked Anne breathlessly.

"Almost precisely what you saw," he replied. "I fancied myself here--rushing upstairs to the library in my haste to see you--to tell you I was not dead, and to ask you if you would have cared much had it been so. I saw all the scene--the hall, the staircase already lighted. This room--and you coming in at the door with a half-frightened, half-eager look in your face. Then it grew confused. I next remember standing here beside you on the hearthrug with my hand on your shoulder--thus, Anne--and gazing into your eyes, and struggling, struggling to ask you what I wanted so terribly to know. But the words would not come, and the agony seemed to awake me. Yet with the awaking came the answer. Something had answered me; I said to myself, 'Yes, Anne does love me.'"

And Anne remembered the strange feeling of joy which had come to her even in the first bitterness of her grief. She turned to the hand that still lay on her shoulder and kissed it. "Oh, Kenneth," she said, "how thankful we should be! But how strange, to think that we owe all to a dream! Was it a dream, Kenneth?"

He shook his head.

"You must ask that of wiser people than I," he said. "I suppose it was."

"But how could it have been a dream?" said Anne again. "You forget, Kenneth--Ambrose saw you too."

"Though I did not see him, nor even think of him. Yes, that makes it even more incomprehensible. It must have been the old fellow's devotion to you, Anne, that made him sympathise with you, somehow."

"I am glad he saw you," said Anne. "I should prefer to think it more than a dream. And there is always more evidence in favour of any story of the kind if it has been witnessed by two. But there is one other thing I want to ask you. It has struck me since that you answered me rather abstractedly that last evening when I spoke about your address, and asked if there was any other of the name in your regiment. Once or twice I have drawn a faint ray of hope from remembering your not very decided answer."

"Yes, it was stupid of me; I half remembered it afterwards. I should have explained it, but it scarcely seemed worth while. I did know another Major Graham might be joining us at Funchal, for that very day I had been entrusted with letters for him. But I was abstracted that evening, Anne. I was trying to persuade myself I didn't care for what I now know I care for more than for life itself--your love--Anne."

Reader Appendix

Story and Publication Context

Molesworth presents the supernatural as evidence shared by two observers. The story's tension comes less from spectacle than from distance, timing and the gradual comparison of separate testimonies.

Source and Editorial Note

From *Four Ghost Stories* (1888), Project Gutenberg eBook #31019.

The public-domain story wording is preserved. Chapter titles, section breaks, portrait notes, setting notes and this appendix are editorial additions created for navigation and reader support.

Key Objects and Terms

The hearthrug - The exact place where the figure appears.

The calling card - A small record of Kenneth's farewell visit.

The newspaper and letter - Documents that eventually connect the vision with events at sea.

Chapter Listening Index

01. A Farewell - 0:05

02. The Apparition - 13:34

03. The Death Notice and the Letter - 22:23

04. The Return and Explanation - 32:14

Listen to the Complete Audiobook

Scan the code to hear the full Piggy Story Studio production while you read.



SCAN TO LISTEN

Complete illustrated audiobook

PIGGY STORY STUDIO

Continue Listening

Discover more illustrated classics, mysteries and ghost stories from Piggy Story Studio.



SCAN TO OPEN PIGGY STORY STUDIO

Subscribe for more illustrated stories

PIGGY STORY STUDIO