

Harwell Hall

The storm was getting _____ worse, so we had no choice but to take shelter in the old house. ‘Harwell Hall’ the sign said, and over it someone had written ‘Keep Out!’ But the house itself was more forbidding than any sign. Though the lower doors and windows were boarded up, the upstairs casements swung _____ in the wind as though a hidden hand was _____ opening and shutting them. Tiles had _____ slipped off the roof in places, revealing the gaunt roof timbers- like a skeleton beneath flesh. At the entrance to the house, two menacing statues stood _____ like hunched demons _____ waiting to pounce. The house was a rotting carcass, no longer fit for humans to inhabit.

A gust of driving rain finally made up my mind. “Come on,” I shouted _____, “let’s get inside _____.”

“No way am I going in that... house of horrors!” replied Jared, _____.

“It’s just an old house,” I said, “and it beats getting wet!”

I walked _____ past the ‘Harwell Hall – Keep Out’ sign and down the path to the front entrance.

I saw Jared hesitate, then he shouted, “Jim, wait!” and came running after me.

One kick on the front door and the rotten wood gave way easily; we stepped inside. It was dark and cobwebs hung _____ everywhere but there was nothing to be afraid of: except for a faint scurrying sound- mice probably. _____, we moved down the hall and went through an open door into another room.

It looked as though it had once been the lounge. There were some chairs draped with covers, a small table and a shadeless lamp, which thankfully gave a dim light when I switched it on. Everything of value had been removed years ago.

“What’s that?” asked Jared, _____. He pointed to a small object on the floor. I carefully picked it up. It was a child’s doll; the strange thing was there was no dust on it. Everything else was thick with dust but the doll was clean. _____, I suggested trying another room, trying not to appear frightened.

_____, we walked to the next room which was the library. There were rows and rows of shelves, full of mildewed books. _____, our eyes were drawn to something else that seemed strange. Lying on the table was an open book, but the absence of dust showed that it had recently been read. The title of the book was, *Haunted Harwell Hall*. I began to read it but suddenly there was a howling wind that sounded like a cry of pain. I dropped the book. We ran _____ from the library.

“Let’s try to find some candles- I don’t like the darkness,” Jared wailed _____.