

What Really Happened?
by Karen Liu

I wake up to my whitewashed room, ever since moving here I hated the barred windows, it barely lets the lights in. Only if Elaina never convinced me to move to this place. The room is very small, and the padded walls are a strange choice for decoration. I sit quietly and pass my time listening to the radio I have. The soft music suddenly turns to static, and the voices come again. I listen intently trying to make out what they are saying, the ghosts are shy at first but soon they'll talk to me. I speak aloud to the ghost of Mr. Hendrich, a ghost who died in the confederate army during the Civil War.

"Mr. Hendrich tell me about how you died." I ask. The ghosts like to talk about their death. His soft voice thickens with emotion as he talks about his last moment on Earth.

"We weren't ready for the shell to come," he wails. "A voice said to take cover but it was too late the blast blown my legs off and I just closed my eyes. The battle at Gettysburg wasn't worth it! We were just being sent to our death!" I listen to Mr. Hendrich recall the Civil War. That's when a new voice comes to my attention. It's soft and feathery with a accent I just can't place.

"Megan Abbott is that you? It's Mrs. Jennings I worked with both your parents. It's such a shame your mother died before..." The voice trails off in remembrance. I sit there confused what did this woman mean? My mother died of cancer long ago and then suddenly then my father died of the same cause.

"What do you mean?" I ask with uncertainty. "My mother died of cancer more than 30 or so years ago."

Mrs. Jennings laughs and replies, "No, I suppose that's what they told you didn't they?" She chuckles to herself. "Of course that's what they had to say. Nobody could know what happened to us, why we died."

I ask again frantically "What do you mean? Did something happen?" A pit in my stomach suddenly grows and I just have the feeling that something else happened to my parents.

"Oh, yes, the accident in the experiment. The unaccounted for variable..." Mrs. Jennings mumbles to herself.

"What?! What happened?!" I'm shouting desperately for an answer. But suddenly a soft hand lightly rests on my shoulder. I look around to see the worried smile of a nurse.

"Mrs. Abbott I would have to ask you to keep it down. It's time to take your medication this stronger dose may keep away those hallucinations." She says this kindly to me with a sad sort of smile.

"What do you mean?" I ask. "I'm about to learn what truly happened to my parents. This radio can listen to ghosts."

"I'm afraid those are hallucinations, Mrs. Abbott; you see, you're not allowed to have outlets in the room. The radio was never plugged in. That's the part of the Jefferson Mental Asylum rules, Mrs. Abbott."