

Bennett told me this story herself. She had been north to visit friends in the State of Washington. Now she was driving back to her home in California. The last lap of the day's journey was over the Cascade Range that stretches from Washington to California. It was late evening and snow had begun to fall before she finally reached the little Oregon town where she planned to spend the night.

Tired and ready for a hot meal and a good night's sleep, she stopped at the first place she came upon. It was an old hotel on the main street. The lobby had a musty odour. The seedy clerk behind the desk signed her in. Her room was on the third floor - Room 310. An elderly bellhop helped her with her luggage.

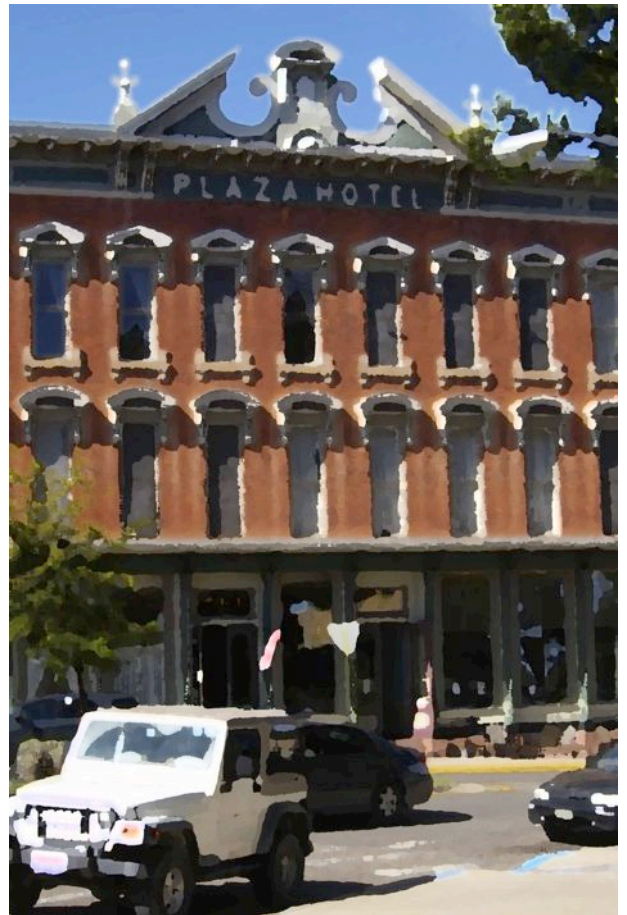
As soon as the door was opened, a blast of hot air struck Marsha full in the face. With the hot air came something else, something she could not define but that filled her with dread. "It was heavy and depressing," she explained, "with the strong scent of the evil." She felt as if she was about to faint.

All she said was, "It's awfully hot." The bellhop tinkered with the radiator knobs. Then he opened the window and left. The room began to cool off, but the feeling of despair and dread grew stronger. It centred on the open square of black window space. The terror seemed to speak in her mind. "Go to the window," it said. "Throw yourself out, out, out!" Terrified, Marsha flung herself on the bed farthest from the window. "I kept saying no, no, no to that voice," she told me, "but the voice kept insisting." "You can't fight me, you puny thing," it said. "Sooner or later you'll jump. I'll make you jump! Jump!" At last Marsha could stand it no longer. She jumped up, calling herself a coward. "Coward or not," she explained, "I was sure that if I stayed the night, I'd be dead by morning."

Marsha was prepared to sacrifice the money she'd already paid just to leave, but when she went downstairs with her baggage to check out, the clerk never asked what was wrong or if she wished to try another room. He returned the full cash amount to her. Marsha drove down the street to a modern motel. As she entered the lobby, she felt the dark depression slip from her shoulders. She became almost giddy with relief.

She had planned to be on her way early the next morning. Instead she decided to stay over a day and look into the history of the old hotel to see if

she could discover the reason for her terrifying experience there. She visited the local library to make a few inquiries. An elderly librarian sat behind the desk. "I'm just wondering," Marsha said tentatively. "Did anything shocking ever happen in the old hotel?"



The librarian looked at her strangely. "How did you come upon that bit of history?" she asked. "It took the hotel a long time to squash the story." The librarian went on to tell what had happened. One evening back in 1966 a couple checked into the hotel as Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Smith. The next morning hotel employees found the young woman's body lying on the sidewalk outside the hotel beneath Room 310. The man, who had registered as her husband, had disappeared. "At first it was ruled suicide," the librarian concluded. "But then they pried open her fist and found it clutched a handful of dark curly hair, not her own. So they made a search for the murderer. But he was never found . . ."

"By the way," the librarian suddenly added, "isn't that a coincidence! It all happened on November 5, fifty years ago yesterday."

ILL. "PLAZA HOTEL", PHOTO: LDs

THE EVIL IN ROOM 310 Comprehension questions	right	wrong
1. The story happened to me fifty years ago.		x
2. The story happened in summer.		
3. The story took place in the US-state of Oregon.		
4. The old hotel was outside the town.		
5. Marsha Bennet had no luggage with her.		
6. A bellhop is a kind of servant.		
7. There was no heating in room 310		
8. Room 310 looked cosy and modern.		
9. In her room, Marsha could hear the voice of the hotel clerk.		
10. Marsha was afraid of the voice and she decided to leave the hotel.		
11. Somebody or something wanted Marsha to jump out of the window.		
12. The clerk didn't want to give Marsha any money back.		
13. In the next hotel Marsha heard the voice again.		
14. Marsha didn't stay in Oregon. She left the town at once and drove non-stop to California.		
15. Marsha stayed because she was interested in the story of the hotel.		
16. Marsha thought that she could find the answer to the mystery in an old church.		
17. The woman in the library wondered why Marsha didn't like the hotel.		
18. The woman who was killed in the hotel had dark curly hair.		
19. It is supposed that Mr Oscar Smith was a murderer.		
20. Mr Oscar Smith was hanged for murderer on November 5.		
21. The hotel used the ghost story to attract customers and make better business.		
22. 50 years after the murderer, the police arrested an old librarian.		
23. Except to the librarian Marsha never told anybody about the strange things that happened to her on that 5 November in room 310.		
24. Marsha herself never believed that there was something evil or even a ghost in her hotel room.		
25. It seems true that something very shocking happened in the hotel 50 years ago.		