

Below is the beginning of a story. It is up to you to create a title and write the main body of the text and the conclusion. The direction and the type of story are up to you – I have only given you background. Your text should be about 400 - 450 words. The story should continue, and the conclusion should be a twist. Have fun!

Her porch light is perpetually lit. It is unnoticeable on sunny days and casts furtive shadows in the evenings. I never saw anyone changing a bulb, and I never remember the light being off. I live across the street from Mrs. Delores Caedes. I should say that I “lived” because last week they took her away in a slow-moving ambulance, zipped up tightly in a black body bag.

She was already old when I was a child. I recall a weathered, wrinkled face, brown liver spots on her arms, and long, yellowing fingernails. She was my babysitter after school until my parents came home from work. She rarely spoke, so I knew very little about her. She collected our mail when we went on vacation. Every night she’d sit on her veranda and smoke a cigarette. After her husband left, she never had visitors.

There is a driveway and a garage, but the Caedes never owned a car. The house, built the same year as mine, – 1912 - has never been renovated. There are no pictures or art on the walls, and I have never seen the basement or the second floor. The kitchen and bathroom are clean but appear as if they have never been used, and both areas smell of mothballs.

My teen friends found her spooky, and their unease provoked them to do pranks on her, especially on Halloween. Stealing her “smoking” chair and putting it in the middle of the road, throwing eggs at her front door, and toilet papering her old tree were some of their favourite tricks.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Caedes were gardeners. That is, they grew one kind of plant – tomatoes. Their backyard had about 40 plants, and by August you could smell ripe tomatoes when you walked in front of their house. Preparing the garden, planting, pruning, and harvesting was an activity done in silence. There was no way they could eat all the tomatoes themselves so what happened to all their produce was a mystery.

When my parents died suddenly in a car accident, I inherited our family house, and I live here alone, across the street from old Mrs. Caedes.

Mr. Caedes was a mystery. When I was young, I saw him cutting the grass and trimming the bushes. I never heard him speak. Then he was gone. No one knew where, and no one ever spoke about him. When I was a teenager, I asked Mrs. Caedes about him. She put her wrinkled old finger to her cracked, pale lips and made a “shhhhh” sound.

In one of the therapy sessions I had after my parents died, I suddenly recalled a time when I was about ten years old. I was at the Caedes house. Mrs. Caedes asked for my help.