

## Phantom Bigfoot & The Haunted House

After ignoring several closed doors in the gloomy corridor, Duane paused. His hypersensitive nose not only reminded him of the familiar pungent stench he had concocted, it also told him this was the right room. He entered the unlit ME's lab and with his ultra-intensified eyesight immediately saw the two sections of Old Man Peabody's beloved precious heirloom lying on a cadaver table covered in a white sheet. He gave a chortle.

A thought crossed his mind -- had Herb the ME said a final last word over the deceased toilet. There was just enough time for a chuckle. Get serious! Phantom Bigfoot was on a mission. Using the sheet, Duane wrapped the two sections together then tightly twisted the sheet and knotted it. He slung the two sections of the john over his shoulder with little effort and made good his escape. Like some weird Santa Claus, he stomped across town.

This prank was not by choice but on the behest of Miss Mamie Funderburk. The old bat had already double-dared him to revisit the haunted house. So here he was, and with no option but to replace the priceless toilet for his next impending crime.

After dodging curious Beaverites he snuck round back and stood before the creepy edifice. A cloud released the crescent moon, reflecting from the attic windows like demon's eyes. The wooden shingles resembled the scales of some demonic nightmare creature waiting to devour him.

With a shudder he crept into the kitchen and froze due to the unnatural chill in the air. A particularly warm summer's night and wearing his stuffy Bigfoot duds should have made him sweat gallons. But his fear of this spooky house made all the difference. With skin rippled with goose-bumps he trembled and not just because of the cold but in abject terror of the ghost of Truman Peabody.

Was that eerie laughter? The hairs on the back of his neck stood on end while his wild eyes looked around the gloomy

kitchen that hadn't been refitted since the 1950s. This was definitely a place he didn't want to be on his lonesome but he was on a dare and never welched.

He used his keen eye-sight to look into the darkness paying particular attention to the corners where something unpleasant could be lurking. To his relief there was nothing out of the ordinary to see but that didn't mean there was nothing there, just he couldn't see whatever was lurking in the shadows. That thought gave him further reason to be spooked.

A grandfather clock chimed. An organ played *Bach's Toccata and Fugue*, faint but discernible.

Best not dawdle, get on with the job before the ghost of Old Man Peabody really got going and showed up in person. Probably be mega miffed. And having watched *Scooby-Doo* many times, Duane had no doubt there was nothing worse than a miffed ghost.

So, with as much haste as Phantom Bigfoot could muster with a heavy toilet on his back, he ventured further into the house. His clumsy right big foot kicked a bucket that should not have been where it was. The clatter was ear-shattering until the bucket rested against the stairs. Pausing in the unlit cobwebbed hallway, he shivered, listening to the eerie silence. "Don't make another sound, lest you wake the dead, you dumbass," he berated himself.

Duane ascended the stairs but something told him he was being watched. You can do this, he urged. Just don't dither. Don't let the ghost get to you.

He reached the upper hallway and stared at the photos and paintings on the wall. Without further hesitation he scampered down the hallway as fast as his Bigfoot big feet could take him. But when he got to Old Man's Peabody's portrait he skidded to a halt and looked at the hideous image of the Hollywood actor's face. The Joker! Just looking at that face gave him the shudders. The eyes moved! The moustache twitched!

With a moan, Phantom Bigfoot made for the bathroom. Like a visiting Father Christmas he slung the toilet from his shoulder and dropped it to the floor with a resounding thud. The noise was a crescendo in the spooky silence.

Duane froze listening for a reaction. With a shrug, he frantically unwrapped both toilet sections and stood them together in the spot where it had resided for well over a hundred years. He stood back to admire his handiwork upon which once reputedly sat *Wyatt Earp*, only to see the two halves fall apart. Damn it! He remembered something. Duane rummaged in his duds and removed duct tape with which he repaired the john to his satisfaction. A ghostly moaning carried on a chill breeze ruffled the imitation fur he wore. Was that the Old Man bemoaning his once intact heirloom?

Okay job done, time to get the hell out of here, he thought. Bundling the sheet into the empty cupboard under the washbasin, he scrambled the heck out of there, his Bigfoot big feet almost tripping over each other in his haste. Once outside the Peabody House, Phantom Bigfoot breathed a relieved sigh thinking all had gone well. Perhaps too well.