

# THE HAUNTED CASTLE

by **Thomas Merton**

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1929  
Western Cottage  
Windsor (The Acre)

## CHAPTER I

In which Sir Ted le Pooh comes to The Haunted Castle

“Hmm,” said Ted, as he girded his trusty sword, “I really wonder if I will find some honey in that castle.” Sir Ted le Pooh was about to set out on a terrible mission, as he was getting remarkably short of provisions and he knew that in the Castle de Miel there was a great quantity of something. Ted did not know wether [sic] it was honey or not, but he hoped it was. So, that is why he was setting out on such a perilous mission.

The sun was shining brightly when Ted left his house by a large hill. He went on and on, for miles and miles, and whenever he saw a bird, he asked it the way. So, you see, it was rather hard for him to get lost. It was noon, and about lunch time, when Sir Ted felt that he absolutely must have a “little bite of something.” So he was forced to eat blackberries, as there was no honey anywhere near him. After a while, he started out again, not noticing that his face was all purple with blackberry juice.

It was about half past five when he reached the haunted castle. He walked up to the great iron door, feeling rather shaky as he didn’t know wether [sic] the spooks would exactly like to have a bear even though that bear was a knight—or a TED! He looked at the door [on which] was written in large letters: “Notice” but when it came to understanding what was underneath, Ted was quite incapable. “Now I wonder” he said to himself “if that means” ‘trespassers will be proscitooted’ or ‘one guinea reward will be awaridided to . . .’

He stood there musing for a very long time and then he thought that the ghosts inside might think he was afraid to come in or that he couldn’t read, so he said aloud just to make them know that he was both a brave and intellectual bear: “Yes, I think it must be quite worthwhile” (that was in case it was a reward) “Really I don’t care it they will be proscitooted” (that was in case it was “Trespassers will be prosecuted”).

He looked at a little window out of the corner of his eye to see if the ghosts were looking out—then a voice was heard behind him: it said: “That notice means “Beware, this castle is haunted.” Ted turned around and there was Dick. “Oh good morning, Dick. Yes, I knew it all the time—of course that’s what it meant.”

## CHAPTER II

“Well,” said Dick after a while “Hadn’t we better go in?”

“Most certi— I mean certan— no, I mean certitanley— well, in fact, I mean Yes” said Ted—You see, he couldn’t pronounce certainly quite correctly—Then he went on: “Hadn’t we better knock?”

“Yes,” said Dick after a short pause. They knocked loudly but nobody answered. They waited, then knocked again, but still nobody answered.

“Shouldn’t we shout?” suggested Ted in a whisper. Dick looked up and shouted “Hoy!” Ted shouted “Open the door.” Still nobody answered. “I really think we’ll have to adopt despar measures.”

“Despar wiches?” asked Ted.

“We’ll have to push the door open.”

Ted was uncertain. “Don’t you think they would get angry?” he asked.

“We don’t mind if they do” exclaimed Dick. “Come along Ted.”

He pushed the great door open and strode into the castle, with Ted close on his heels. They found themselves in a great hall, a great long hall with a lofty ceiling and a long shiny polished floor. The hall was quite empty, and the door creaking on it’s [sic] rusty hinges made a great ringing noise in the hall. Ted and Dick stopped and looked around them.

“Well, Ted, hadn’t we better be getting along?” said Dick.

“Well—I mean—of course you quite understand—But I’d—you know—well” muttered Ted uneasily, for he thought he saw a ghost dart across the hall, near the end. “You aren’t afraid Ted?” asked Dick.

“Oh, no!” answered Ted promptly. “But—”

“Come along.” Dick started to walk down the hall, when suddenly two voices were heard behind them. They turned around and there stood a little man, and a funny animal.

“May we come with you?” they both asked, all out of breath.

“Yes, come along!” answered Dick. “But, who are you?”

“Don’t you know me?” asked the little man, who wore a funny blue uniform.

“I can’t remember you” answered Dick after a while.

“Well, I’m the man who drives your toc-toc boat.”

“Oh, of course!” answered Dick and Ted both in chorus. “But who is this funny animal?”

“I” answered the animal, who was a large one—nearly as large as Dick, if he stood up on his hind legs—“am a jagular!”

Oh!” said Ted, moving a few paces further away.

“Hmm” said Dick.

“Yes, went on the Jagular, “I’m the brother of the one who’s [sic] skin used to hang up in western Cottage at Windsor.

“Really!” exclaimed Dick, “well, now we’d better be getting along,” and they all started off down the long hall.

## CHAPTER III

They had not walked more than a few yards when suddenly the Driver of the Toc-Toc Boat, who was called "Toc-toc" for short suddenly shouted, "Help!" and began to slide with great speed right down the slippery floor.

"I'll catch him!" shouted Jagular, and he began to run down after Toc-toc. But he too, soon slipped, and was whirled down the floor growling and roaring.

Ted and Dick stood looking at them in amazement, then down fell Ted and off he slid on his back faster than all the rest. "Oh Ted! Come back!" shouted Dick. But he knew better than to try and stop him for he knew that he would only slip like the rest. So he went back to try and find a way that wasn't slippery, by which he could go and save all his companions—they had nearly disappeared.

At that moment, the great door banged shut, and Dick was left in pitch-dark, as the room did not have one window.

Dick groped about in his jacket for his torch—he had left it at home! "Well," he said to himself "I'll have to find them in the dark" and he started off down the hall.

A moment passed, then he felt himself whirled off his feet and away he went too, sliding down the hall like his companions. How long he slid he did not know but at last, he hit something quite soft with a bump, bounced back and rolled over and over in another direction.

## CHAPTER IV

When Ted had finished sliding, he had done exactly what Dick had done: he bumped against something, and had rolled over and over wondering if it was a pot of honey or otherwise.

A moment later, he picked himself up in a strange room, lighted by a small loophole. He looked around, and saw a bed in the corner. He suddenly stumbled, and fell right on it, and when he got up again he couldn't seem to get rid of the sheets. He went running out of the room, trying to tear them away. Jagular, on his part, rolled into a great deep bowl full of pitch, and when he emerged, he stumbled into a great box of feathers—you can imagine how terrible he looked.

As for Toc-toc, he appeared covered with treacle! Now all three had gone into different rooms, but in between all these rooms was another large room. Now they all came out of their rooms at the same time—they all saw each other at once and they all looked so horrible that they thought each other were ghosts.

"Gr-r-r-r-o-o-ch!" roared Jagular in fright! At the terrible sound the others all ran away in a terrible fright, but they only seemed to be able to come back to the room, where they always met.

They were thoroughly terrified and breathless, and were still running about when suddenly they met Dick.

"What are you doing?" asked Dick looking at them.

"Glub—Glub—Spook—Glub!" said Toc-toc, waving a treacly arm at Jagular.

“Groo-ch—arf-f-f—shpook-groooch” answered Jagular, waving a feathery arm at Toc-toc.

“Spooks!” said Ted, emerging from the sheet and pointing at Jagular and Toc-toc.

Dick burst out laughing. “Now then—go on with you—go and clean yourselves up.”

#### CHAPTER IV [sic]

They all shamefully retired to their rooms and cleaned themselves up. Ted, to his surprise, saw that the bed which he had fallen on was full of beautiful jars of honey. As for Jagular, he found that underneath the feathers were beautiful large joints (for Jagular likes meat).

Toc-toc said he would keep the rest of the treacle.

And as for Dick, he went back to the thing everyone had bumped against, and found that it was a large box full of lovely pots of jam, of Bath buns, of eclairs, of jam tarts and plum puddings.

So everyone kept what he had found, and they all went home.

#### CHAPTER V

Ted ate quantities of honey.

Jagular ate his joints.

Toc-toc ate his treacle

While Dick—

had everything one could wish for.