

The Tale of Annetta

It was a cold and windy day when Annetta arrived at the Smithton Estate. She had been dressed in her nicest dress and had her hair pinned up just right. She was ready to meet Uncle Trenton. All she knew about her Uncle was that he was rich. One night she had overheard her father and mother talking about how he cared for little but money. Annetta thought to herself *“this couldn’t have been true if he was taking me in now. I mean his sister and her husband have died in a horrific accident.”* Annetta shook her head to forget about it. She untucked her hands beneath her legs and took a deep breath before she got out of the car.

She had seen the estate from the car ride, but it looked much bigger in person. Annetta looked at the vines wrapped around the house and how they were attached to the tinted glass windows. The house looked gloomy, and the surrounding woods looked as if they were covered in dark clouds. *“What a creepy place”* thought Annetta.

Ms. Stinteworth came up to Annetta, “Hello. I’m Ms. Stinteworth. I am your Uncle’s housekeeper, and I will be helping care for you. You’re not much of an eye catcher! Thirteen years old?” Ms. Stinteworth went to touch her face but Annetta dodged it. “Ooh. No touching. Got it! I guess let’s go get you situated!” Annetta knew she was not going to like her.

They walked up the front steps to the double open doors. Annetta looked around. The ceiling was high, and a beautiful shiny chandelier hung from the top. *“It’s a castle”* thought Annetta. She looked at the golden staircase shaped in a semicircle that ran up to the second floor. Her mouth must have been hanging because Ms. Stinteworth was giving her an odd look.

“Your room is just up these stairs. I will show you around after we put your things up.”

Ms. Stinteworth motioned for Annetta to follow her. Annetta walked slowly with Ms.

Stinteworth admiring the landscape that was now in front of her.

Annetta was shown around the estate by Ms. Stinteworth. At the last stop, they headed to the dining hall where Uncle Trenton was waiting to meet Annetta. “Now Mr. Trenton does not talk much so, don’t make too much racket,” Ms. Stinteworth’s pointed her finger at Annetta.

“Remember always use your manners and be thankful he brought you here.”

Annetta was agitated but she nodded her head and walked in with Ms. Stinteworth. She saw her Uncle sitting at the end of the long table staring at her. “Hello, I’m your niece Annetta.”

“I most certainly know who you are. Now sit,” He motioned her sit at the other end of the table “Now, I’m sure Ms. Stinteworth showed you the house?” He cocked his head to the side looking at Ms. Stinteworth.

“Yes sir.” Annetta replied. “You have such a beautiful house.”

He shifted his head to Annetta. “Yes. My wife... I mean your aunt... who is now deceased... well it was hers and I inherited it from her years ago when she passed. Just as you inherited quite a sum from your father.” He smiled. Annetta did not know what to say so she nodded her head once. Other than goodnights, there had not been another word spoken that night between Annetta and her Uncle.

Three months had passed. It was night and Annetta lay in her bed wondering whether or not she liked it here. *“I don’t mind that Uncle Trenton isn’t much of a talker because neither am I, but I do not like Ms. Stinteworth,”* she thought. Just then she heard a creak and threw her head

towards the noise. *Another creak.* Annetta rose from the bed and made her way to the door.

“Hello?” Annetta called out. No answer. She opened the door, and nothing was there. She heard a creak come from down the stairs and decided to follow it. The creaking led her to a room just below the stairs and she opened the door. It was dark and seemed to smell of dust. “Hello?” Annetta called out.

“Hello?” A quiet voice came from the dark. “Can you hear me?”

“Well with all that creaking, I suppose it would be impossible not to,” the words came out of Annetta’s mouth, “I’m sorry Ms. Stinteworth.”

“Ms. Stinteworth? No. I’m not *her*,” the voice sounded offended.

Annetta looked around but couldn’t see anything, “I said I’m sorry. I know it’s you and you’re scaring me.”

Annetta got an eery feeling and started to take some steps back.

“Wait!” The voice was louder this time, and she could feel a wind hit her face. She froze. “I must warn you! You can’t trust her!”

“Who?” Annetta was confused.

“Ms. Stinteworth. She’s in love with Trenton but he will never love her. She will poison you so that Trenton will get the money you inherited,” the voice lowered, “just as she did me.”

Annetta felt a chill go down her spine and ran out of the room.

It had been two weeks since Annetta heard the voice. She tried to tell her Uncle about it, but he told her that she was only hearing the house creak because it was so old. “Sometimes I can swear it talks to me too” he would laugh. Ms. Stinteworth had grown colder with Annetta and sent her to bed early most nights when Uncle wasn’t there.

It was close to dinnertime and Annetta could feel her stomach growling but she was not about to ask Ms. Stinteworth for anything and her uncle was napping, so she made her way to the kitchen.

Ms. Stinteworth was standing there and snapped her head towards Annetta, “What are you doing here?”

“I’m just hungry so I thought I’d grab something.” Annetta said softly.

“I’m making dinner. You can wait.” Annetta had noticed a small white jar she had never seen before sitting at the edge of the counter. Ms. Stinteworth must have noticed her see it because in one swift motion, she grabbed it and put it in her pocket.

“What was that?” Annetta asked.

“Nothing. Get out of here or else you will not be getting anything!” Ms. Stinteworth threw up her hands and waved them to direct Annetta out.

When Annetta was called for dinner, she sat at the long table by herself. Ms. Stinteworth was standing at the corner. “Where’s Uncle?”

“He’s napping. I am not to wake him up.” Ms. Stinteworth said. “Eat up, so I can put you to bed.”

Annetta looked down at her food and her stomach growled. The meat looked like it had been cooked perfectly and the potatoes had been seasoned with rosemary from what Annetta could see. Just as Annetta reached for her fork, Uncle Trenton walked in.

“Oh! I see how it is,” he laughed “Where’s my dinner?” *He must have had a good nap,* Annetta thought.

“I did not know you would wake so soon sir!” Ms. Stinteworth explained with her eyes wide in surprise. Trenton reached over to grab one of the potatoes. “NO!” Stinteworth yelled. He froze.

“What Lula?” Uncle Trenton said.

She walked over to him and took the potato from his hand, “That’s not meant for you. That’s Annetta’s.” She looked at the potato. “They seem cold. Let me just take this and warm it up.” She reached for Annetta’s plate.

Just then everything clicked. Annetta held on tight to her plate. “NO. Uncle Trenton, she poisoned my food!”

Uncle Trenton let out a laugh, “What an imagination!”

Ms. Stinteworth joined in with a nervous laugh, “That’s crazy!”

Uncle Trenton reached for another potato, “Guess I’m about to find out!” and popped it into his mouth. Ms. Stinteworth’s eyes nearly popped out of her head and she grabbed Trenton’s mouth and dug it out. “What in the world?” Uncle backed up. “You tried poisoning my niece?”

“She killed your wife too! She poisoned her, like she was gonna poison me!” Annetta declared.

“Is that true?” Uncle Trenton grew red.

“I did it to save you. So, we could be together. Elizabeth was so controlling over your money and you wanted to be the man of the house. We would be rich and happy with her gone and Annetta too!” Ms. Stinteworth reached for him.

Uncle Trenton grabbed her arm. “Lula, how could you?” With that, he dragged Ms. Stinteworth with him over to the phone and dialed the police.

Gothic Elements

I was excited about being able to do this paper/story and include some gothic elements. I loved most of the stories we read in class and wanted it to be captivating like those! I actually ended up changing the whole story to better fit the gothic. I started the story out with some weather conditions, like cold and windy to add the first element of Gothic to my work. In a gothic novel, there is always a heroine. In my story, the heroine is named Annetta. She is the niece of Uncle Trenton and she has been sent to his estate after her parents passed away from an accident. This estate is also another element used; a scary castle-like place often found in the Gothic. It is gloomy and, in the woods, far away from other houses. It also holds secrets that will be found out when you read! Annetta does not like the house from the get-go. There is some talk about money and estate in my story, that have also been an element in other Gothic novels we have read. The readers are then introduced to Ms. Stinteworth who is Uncle Trenton's housekeeper that lives in the house with him. She is not a favorite character, certainly not to Annetta. I would even go as far as to state that she is the villain, another element of the Gothic. Annetta is figuring out if she belongs when she is surprised by the ghost of Uncle Trenton's dead wife, Elizabeth. This is the supernatural element I wanted to add. I hope you enjoy my story!