

# Death Comes Knocking

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## A Fright in the Night

Everyone knew everything about everyone in Llanprid, a charming old village in the middle of Wales. Many of the **residents** were related, most were friendly towards each other, and those who were neither friends nor relatives loved **gossiping** about each other. The same families had lived in the same houses for at least three generations, and young lovers often strengthened the **close-knit community** by getting married. Few people decided to move away forever. Those who did were usually the black sheep of the family. One example was Peter Wallis, the adopted son of Catherine Wallis. Everyone knew he was not really a Wallis, but nobody knew his real surname. Even the other children in Llanprid had not accepted the strange, tall boy who had arrived in their village when he was nine years old. He had always been an outsider, and he was happy to leave the place almost ten years later when he began studying law at university. Since then, he had never looked back. Peter did not stay in close contact with anyone in the village apart from Catherine. After all, she was the nearest thing he had to family. And Catherine, who was very proud of her son, never **tired of** telling her neighbours about his **achievements**. This made it difficult for the other residents of Llanprid to forget about Peter Wallis, that

<b>residents</b>	Einwohner
<b>to gossip</b>	tratschen
<b>close-knit community</b>	enge Gemeinschaft
<b>to tire of doing sth.</b>	müde werden, etw. zu tun
<b>achievements</b>	Leistungen

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unusually quiet person who always dressed in black.

Now in his mid-thirties, Peter was a successful lawyer in Cardiff. Although he did not have the time to visit Catherine very often, he **kept in touch** on the telephone, and he sent a postcard whenever he went on holiday.

At the start of their conversation one early Sunday evening, Peter noticed that his mother sounded very upset.

"Oh, Peter!" she began, "I'm so glad I could reach you."

Catherine did not usually call on Sundays because that was the day Peter rang her; his mother's turn was on Wednesdays. They always spoke after her favourite television programme ended at 9 p.m. This was something that had simply become a tradition.

"You know I always have my mobile with me," he answered. "I was going to call you later. Is everything all right, Mum?"

"No, not really," she replied in a **shaky** voice. "It's not all right at all. There were some horrible noises coming from upstairs earlier, and they started again a few moments ago... I can't **get hold of** any of the neighbours. I don't know what to do!"

"Try to relax, Mum," said Peter calmly. "**Put the kettle on** and tell me what you mean."

Peter could remember growing up in that old cottage. He had been an **only child**, but there had been lots of spiders and mice to play with. Some of the neighbours' cats often came round as well, either to eat the food he put out in the back garden for them or to hunt fresh mice for themselves. It meant that there were always funny noises coming from somewhere. But his mother was certain that she could hear a human voice this time, and that someone was laughing and calling her name.

"It sounded like Cyril!" she told him.

<b>to keep in touch</b>	in Verbindung bleiben
<b>shaky</b>	zitterig
<b>to get hold of sb.</b>	jmd. erreichen
<b>to put the kettle on</b>	Wasser aufsetzen
<b>only child</b>	Einzelkind

"I'm sure there's nobody else in the house," he replied. "How could there be? You always lock the doors, don't you?"

Catherine agreed, and before the kettle had even started whistling she was beginning to sound a little more relaxed. Talking to Peter helped her to **think straight**, and he was right about one thing: living alone since the **divorce** had made her very nervous.

"I only have to hear the doorbell ring and I almost **jump out of my skin**," she joked. "My poor heart will be the death of me."

A long time ago, the Wallises had been one of the largest families in Llanprid. Nature was not on their side, though: many of Catherine's relatives had died of **heart failure** before they reached the age of forty.

"That's how I lost both my mother and your uncle," she remembered aloud and **sighed**.

### Übung 1: Fill in the blanks. Lesen Sie weiter und ergänzen Sie den Text mit dem passenden Wort!

front   doorbell   neighbours   surprise

Suddenly the 1. \_\_\_\_\_ rang and Catherine jumped up in 2. \_\_\_\_\_.

"Oh! Just a minute, dear," she said. "There's someone at the 3. \_\_\_\_\_ door."

"Do you really think you should answer it?" asked Peter. "Yes, it'll be one of the 4. \_\_\_\_\_. I left a message with Mary asking her to come round. I'll call you later."

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Peter paused again and finally agreed, "Okay, Mum."  
 "Goodbye, dear!" she said and hung up.  
 Catherine picked up her **cane** and began walking towards the front door. On her way, she was **startled** by a loud knocking from the other side of the house. It sounded as if there was somebody at the back door. Was it possible? She'd just been sitting there in the kitchen. "Who's there?" she called.

to think straight	klar denken
divorce	Scheidung
to jump out of one's skin	erschreckt hochfahren
heart failure	Herzversagen
to sigh	seufzen
cane	Spazierstock
to startle sb.	jmd. erschrecken
china	Porzellan
to shuffle	schlurfen
shape	Gestalt, Form

There was no answer from either side of the house, but again a knocking came from the back door. Three loud bangs filled the small cottage. The knocking was so strong that Catherine could hear the **china** plates next to the sink dancing from side to side. Her heart began to race.

Maybe Peter was right, she thought. She shouldn't open the door to anyone, just in case.

"Who is it?" she shouted again nervously.  
 "Hello, Cathy! Is everything all right?" asked a familiar voice from the other side of the back door.

Finally! There was only one person who called her "Cathy". She turned around and **shuffled** along the corridor and back into the kitchen. A **shape** moved behind the glass. Catherine felt much safer knowing that someone had come to keep her company. The kettle was whistling loudly now; she would make them both a nice cup of tea.

After turning the key in the lock with a shaky hand, she opened the door.

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**Übung 2: Translation. Übersetzen Sie die Wendungen aus dem Text!**

1. Ist alles in Ordnung? \_\_\_\_\_
2. nur für alle Fälle \_\_\_\_\_
3. ein bekannte Stimme \_\_\_\_\_
4. die Porzellanteller \_\_\_\_\_

"Thank heavens you're here," she began. "It's been such a..."  
 She fell silent when she saw the face looking back at her. It was not the familiar face she was expecting, but a white, **expressionless** mask. Her eyes opened wide and her heart began to beat even faster. The voice that came from inside was as dark and frightening as the empty, black eyes staring straight at her.

**False Friends**

familiar ≠ familiär  
 familiar = bekannt, vertraut  
 personal, informal = familiär

"Such a scary evening?" it **mocked**.

expressionless	ausdruckslos
to mock	spotten
chest	Brust
sweat	Schweiß
pointless	zwecklos
to witness	miterleben, Zeuge sein von
entire	ganz, gesamt

Catherine dropped her cane and put both hands over her mouth. Her heart seemed to stop beating in her **chest**. Her skin was suddenly covered in a cold **sweat**. She tried to step back into the kitchen, but the dark figure moved too quickly.

All the old woman could do was panic and look around helplessly for someone to save her. She tried to scream, but it was **pointless**; she had no breath to scream.

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Moments later, Catherine Wallis' lifeless body was lying on the cold kitchen floor. Her dead eyes stared at the ceiling in horror. On top of the cooker, the steaming kettle was jumping and screaming as if it had **witnessed** the **entire** scene.

**Übung 3: Multiple choice. Welcher Satz ist korrekt? Kreuzen Sie an!**

1. a)  Peter's Catherine's adopted son.  
 b)  Peter's Catherine's adopted son.
2. a)  He helped her thinking straight.  
 b)  He helped her to think straight.
3. a)  There was a loud knocking at the door.  
 b)  It knocked loudly at the door.
4. a)  Catherine was death on the floor.  
 b)  Catherine was dead on the floor.

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