



Fred & Rita: A Ghost Story?

Inspired by a story Paul McCartney tells about the young John Lennon



It's the end of the College Christmas party. The lights are up. Fred is collecting his coat. Rita taps him on the shoulder.

Rita: Fred, are you ignoring me?

Fred: *Shaking his head* No, of course not. Why do you think that?

Rita: Because I've waved at you several times. You just looked right through me. *She looks at him more closely.* Why aren't you wearing your

glasses?

Fred: *Looks embarrassed.* He thinks glasses are uncool. I don't need them tonight.

Rita: *Laughs* Fred, you can't see anything without your specs!

Fred: *Moves past her* I've got to go! I want to get the last bus.

Rita: *Looks up at the clock* It's too late. You'll never get to the bus stop in time.

Fred: It's okay I'll go through the churchyard.

Rita: At this time of night? Aren't you - ?

Fred: *Laughing* Scared? No! You've been reading too many ghost stories! See you at college tomorrow.

Rita: Fred, wait! We can share a taxi

But Fred is already walking out into the cold December night.

It is snowing and very cold. Fred walks quickly towards the churchyard. But when hesitates when he reaches the entrance. He feels very nervous.

Fred: *Quietly to himself* Are you a man or a mouse? You can't turn back now!

Taking a deep breath Fred hurries along the tree-lined path. It turns left and then right. Above the trees, he can see the shape of the church. In front of him the path turns left again.

Fred quickens his pace. As he turns into the corner he slips on the ice. He falls backwards into the snow.

Fred: *Ow! Muttering to himself* Idiot!

Fred looks up. Snow is falling on his face. He wipes his eyes and tries to get up.

Suddenly the night sky lights up. Through the railing, Fred sees something very strange on the grass between the path and the church.

Fred: What the - ! A man and a woman are leaning over a baby. They are dressed in strange,

shapeless clothes.

Fred jumps to his feet . He runs out of the churchyard and down towards the bus stop. He can see his bus. It begins to move away.

Fred: *Shouting at the departing bus.* Stop! Wait for me!

The bus move off. Its lights disappear into the distance. Fred begins the long walk home.

The next morning Fred takes the bus to college. Rita gets on at her stop.

Rita: So did you catch the last bus? I got a lift just after you left. There was room for you, too.

Fred *Shrugs* I got home in the end.

Rita: Did you walk through the churchyard? Without your glasses? I was worried you might walk into a lampost. Or trip over a gravestone! *Notices Fred's hands are grazed.* Wait a minute, you fell over, didn't you? What happened?

Fred: *Looks around & lowers his voice* I slipped on the ice. But I did see something very strange!

Rita: *Leaning forward* What do you mean?

Fred describes what he saw in the churchyard. He describes the man and the woman.

Rita. And they had a baby with them? At that time of night? In this weather?

Fred: They were wearing dressing gowns. Like they were having breakfast.

Rita: That sounds seriously weird. You don't think they were - ?

Fred: I don't know what they were. But they creeped me out!!

Rita: It was probably just a trick of the light

Fred: No, it wasn't. I know what I saw.

They get off the bus together. They can see the church above them.

Rita: We can check on our way into College. I'm sure there's a simple explanation.

Fred: *Embarrassed* Let's go by the road.

Rita: Why? It takes longer and we're late. Come on, Fred!

Fred: I'm going by road.

Rita: I think you've been reading too many ghost stories?

Fred: *Reluctantly* Alright, I'll come. But don't say I didn't warn you



They enter the churchyard - this time from the opposite direction. It is deserted.

Rita: *Nervous now* Where did you see it?

Fred: Around that corner - by the side of the church.

Rita: This place is a bit scary even during daytime.

Fred: Try coming here at Midnight!

Rita: No chance! What crazy person would do that?

They turn the corner. Fred hangs back. Rita stops. For a second there is silence.



Fred: What's happened? What can you see?

He comes round the corner. Rita can only point her finger at what is happening on the grass in front of the church.

She is laughing so much there are tears in her eyes.

Fred: *Stops. Now he sees what Rita sees. Oh!* **Rita:** *Talking as if to a small child* Now, Fred, you weren't wearing your glasses, were you? Can you see what it is now?

Fred: A [Nativity Scene!](#) That's what I saw. They weren't real people. Or ghosts.

Rita: *In the same slow voice* No, Fred, they were what we call statues. You see the lady looking down at the baby? Her name is Mary. And the little baby doll? That's -

Fred: But what about the light? Why was there a flash of light?

He moves towards the railings to investigate. As he does so, the spotlights on the side of the church come on.

Rita: *Laughing again* It was a security light, Fred. It comes on when there is sudden movement. Like someone falling on their back because they didn't see where they were going. Someone not wearing their glasses? What do you think, Sherlock?

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Glossary

Ignore - pretend not to see or recognise, show no interest in

Specs - spectacles/glasses

Hesitates - to show doubt

Churchyard - grounds around church

Creepy/creep out - scary, sinister

Dressing Gown - worn over pyjamas



[Read about the Nativity](#)

Understanding: Quick Check

1. In what month do you think the party takes place? How do you know?
2. Why does Fred not wear his glasses?
 - a) he doesn't need them
 - b) he wants to attract girls
 - c) he wears contact lenses
3. What happens to Fred in the churchyard?
 - a) he falls over
 - b) he drops his glasses
 - c) he catches a bus
4. What is the 'ghost' Fred sees?
5. Why does Rita think he makes this mistake?

Vocabulary

-yard is a common suffix in English. Complete this table

Root word	-yard	New Meaning
Grave		Cemetery
Back		Rear Garden/patio
Farm		
Church	Churchyard	

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