



Mrs. Number 3

I have no idea whether this story is true or false, but I'll tell you it and you can decide for yourselves.

I think it happened in Magland or Mangastan - I don't remember which.

Imagine a remote inn tucked away in a valley surrounded my mountains. It was run by a lady whose name is that of today's story: "Mrs. Number 3".

So far, it seems a story like any other. But the mystery is that no one knew anything about this lady - not even her name. That's why they called her Mrs. Number 3.

The story begins when Inquisitive John - a seasoned traveler - arrived at the inn to be greeted by Mrs. Number 3:

"Good evening. Welcome to my inn. It's a wonderful place for people who are tired of racing around. It's perfect for resting, sleeping, dreaming, disappearing..."

The inn had a dining room for the guests, which was next to the innkeeper's room. There were just four other guests at the time. Mrs. Number 3 called them down and gave them all a glass of wine to welcome them.

They all drank it, except Inquisitive John, who didn't like wine. When the guests went up to bed, they all fell into a deep sleep and began snoring their heads off. John couldn't sleep a wink and tossed and turned in his bed. At one o'clock, he heard a strange flapping sound coming from the room next door, Mrs. Number 3's room, and saw light through a crack under the door.

"Whatever is that flapping sound?" he thought to himself. John, being inquisitive, got up and peeped through the crack.

What he saw struck him with fear. He still trembles to this day when he recalls it.

Mrs. Number 3 was taking out an old shoe box with lots of things inside it. He saw her take out some small wooden figures - there were chickens, a man, and baskets filled with straw. The innkeeper took six sips of water and then sprinkled water over the figures, who suddenly came to life and began moving!

John was dumbstruck; he didn't dare breathe and his legs were shaking. The hens started laying eggs and the man gathered them up and gave them to the innkeeper. When she had two dozen eggs, she filled the glass with water and sprinkled a little more water on the man and the hen, who turned back into lifeless wooden figures. Then Mrs. Number 3 set to work making cupcakes with the eggs.

Inquisitive John went back to bed, but he was so shaken up by what he'd seen that he couldn't sleep a wink.

The very next morning, Mrs. Number 3 came into the dining room as if nothing had happened and offered the guests the cupcakes she'd baked the night before. They looked delicious and everybody

took one - all except John.

What happened next took him completely by surprise. He was looking through the window when he saw his fellow guests eating the cupcakes. As they did so, they dissolved and turned into cars! It was a terrible sight.

At first, John didn't know what to think or what to do. But he quickly cooked up a plan to put matters right.

He went back to the inn and told Mrs. Number 3 that he would stay another night and that in the afternoon he'd go to the village to buy some cupcakes at the baker's to take home with him.

He didn't sleep a wink that night either. He kept awake and saw that at one o'clock on the dot the same thing happened.

Once again, he looked through the crack and sure enough, there was Mrs. Number 3 going through the same routine with the shoe box and the cupcakes, just like the night before.

Poor John was dead tired the next day when he went down for breakfast, but he stayed awake to carry out his master plan. When he saw the cupcakes on the table, he took one and replaced it with one of the cupcakes he had bought in the village. When the innkeeper came in, he said to her:

"Good morning, Madam. I'll try one of your cupcakes today, but first try one of the ones I bought for you at the best baker's shop in the village." And with that, he offered the innkeeper one of her own cakes.

Lo and behold, she turned into a car at the first bite!

Inquisitive John was so happy as he watched the wicked woman's arms turn into tires. He thought to himself, "I'll drive that car through Magland or Mangastan or whatever the country's called."

A few days later, Inquisitive John ran into an old monk. The man laughed until tears ran down his face as he saw John in the car. He said:

"Well I declare, if it isn't Mrs. Number 3 turned into a car. It serves her right - now she's got a bit of her own medicine."

John was keen to get home but he politely replied:

"You're right, but I think she's paid for her wrongdoings. To tell the truth, I wish I could undo the spell."

The old man nodded and whispered:

"You're right. You're a good person and she's suffered enough. Press the horn three times and you'll see what happens."

So John pressed the horn three times and the car turned into a woman who ran off into the distance. Nobody has ever seen her again from that day to this.

What about you, have you heard of her?

Script: Victoria Bermejo

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