

These Walls  
Philip Gilliver

## *These Walls*

I have never been accustomed to making speeches, no matter what the subject. I have always been one to keep themselves to themselves. However, there are some things that should never remain unsaid. I was the only witness to a horrific murder.

I have resided in Willow Crescent since the very beginning of the century. The one I speak of, is the twentieth. There were more trees on the road back then, hence the name, and in the autumn the pavements were sheeted with golden brown leaves, that made crackling sounds when they were trodden on by feet. How envious I was, to be able to make that sound with limbs.

I cannot walk.

Things were quiet around the area for years with the exception of horses and motor cars. Then silence does not last forever, and on the twelfth day, of eighth month of the year of nineteen-hundred and six, I was most

unfortunate to meet, or rather have thrust upon my company, one Percival Fitzlang.

The aforementioned person and I, exchanged not one word, on his arrival. I was not bothered by this, as he was not by all descriptions, a pleasant man. I was pleased that he was only to occupy the ground floor of the accommodation.

Percival, and I shall try not to mention his name too much, was a scrawny man with a pointed nose. Not that I wanted to observe him a lot, but he had this tendency to move about the place in rodent-like fashion, with hunched shoulders and furtive movements of the feet. It was as if, no matter how large the spaces were, he was always trying to fit himself into a smaller one. As for his face and I am in no position to judge, he didn't exactly possess the looks of stage idol, so it came as something of a surprise when he left the house one morning and returned with a wife.

The recently entitled Olivia Fitz-Lang, was the mirror opposite of her rat-like spouse, in the way that she

glided about the place with confidence and beauty, and filled every square inch of every room she occupied, with light. She also had a very pleasant odour about her, a cross between oranges, honey and apple blossom, the three very scents I had always held with such affection.

I felt that they were ill matched at first, and then as the days went by, I began to change my view slightly. She seemed to be good for him. There were times when smiles on his face, as well as hers, as if she had successfully infected him with some of her sunshine. But as the months went on, things began to work in reverse. I noted a slowness about her step and a curvature of her posture. Gone, was the dancing in her bare feet and her singing. Tones changed, and voices went up and down, and it cut through me like a cold sabre. Suddenly, one of them was gone, and I was deeply saddened.

My ears, as those like me, have them, traversed the walls and the floors in search of this sweet music, for evidence that my sweet Olivia was still there, then one

day I found her voice, and it was to my dismay, her sobbing. I longed to reach out and comfort her. At least I knew that she was alive then.

Then all I could hear was him...

‘Why will you not bear me a child? I shall get more satisfaction from a whore! Why is my home not clean? Have you no pride woman? I shall be going out, I will be back and we shall see who won’t be responsive!’

And then, he began to bring other women to the house, and left his wife locked up in a room all alone.

I swore, if I could move, then I would get to him, kill him. The raucous laughing, and drunken caterwauling that followed, filled me with such rage. The thought that he, could be happy at this time.

Then, on one dreadful day, things all come to a head. The air was polluted by such a blood-curdling scream which shook me from my slumber. And I saw her. She was running up the stairs in such desperation to get away from him. She was running to me, I knew she was, but there was no time to help her. I saw the blade

penetrate her elegant back, between the shoulder blades and she fell. Blood spilled from her mouth, as she shuddered with pain. Still, she tried to move and with her elbows attempted to climb. I wanted to call out, but couldn't. The knife hit her again, this time, in the small of her back, and then in her neck. Then it was all too late. She fell again and this time she would never move again.

Fitz-Lang vanished, and I was left to watch her lifeless form as helpless and sad as anyone could ever be.

He buried her under the floorboards in the dining room of all places, as I assumed that he didn't want to risk being seen in the garden with a spade prior to his wife's disappearance. He returned to scrub away the blood from the carpet. This was the first time I'd seen him do manual labour. He never paid any attention to me though, and this I felt would be his downfall.

Over the next few days he began to have callers. These included a constable by the name of Finchly, all of which were asking after Olivia. First, he told them, that

she hadn't been feeling well, and so she had gone to stay with her sister in Margate, in order to recover in the sea air. After that, he told them she had found a flat for them both, and he was only staying, in order to tie up his affairs before seeking other employment on the coast.

All of these words filled me with bile. One day PC Finchly returned, and I was hopeful, but it was only to follow up a neighbour's complaint about an odd smell that had been seeping through the walls.

Fitz-Lang told the constable, that it was the drains. He had been on a very strict diet of meat which had been clogging up the pipes. He'd been meaning to get them unblocked of all the rotting substances.

I saw what a golden opportunity for my new found rage. I began, by slamming the front door shut, hard. This made them both jump from their seats and the young PC spill his tea over his uniform. I drew the lock across, turned the key and threw it down the cellar. Then, I began to make the walls shake. Pictures rattled and fell to the ground, as if in the middle of an earthquake. The

floorboards too rattled under the carpets, furniture which had been so happy where they were before moved with the intense vibration.

Fitz-Lang attempted to run for the doorway and fell to the floor of the dining room. He didn't know this, but his face was directly over the face of that lovely, poor lass he deprived of life. With another blast of my wrath, I was able to split the wood to reveal her.

Suddenly, to his utter horror, he was staring straight her into her still, lifeless, bloody eyes.

Reaching for the stability of the mantelpiece, Finch got to his feet in horror.

'What is going on?' he cried, 'what kind of house is this?'

The killer too, was struggling to get to his feet. When he finally managed it, Finch saw Olivia.

Finch put his hand to his mouth, and wretched. 'You murderer!' he exclaimed before vomiting.

My work done, I ceased the tumult.



When things had calmed down, several members of the London constabulary came to the house. They had come to see what all the commotion was, why there was suddenly a crowd outside.

Finch apprehended Fitz-Lang and I opened the door, so that the latter could be taken into custody.

I wish that I could have prevented the whole ghastly business from the beginning, but my movement is restricted. I am just a house in Willow Crescent, my walls, filled with the spirits of those who have passed away. It does not mean, that things could go unnoticed by me. Often, it has been said by humans, if these walls could talk...

But these can do so much more.