

Malcolm Malcolmson was a student at college. Malcolm was twenty-one and he was in his final year. Classes had finished and Malcolm was studying hard for his examinations. But Malcolm was unable to study at home. He lived with his family and the large house was always noisy.

‘I can't study here at home,’ Malcolm told his father. ‘It's far too noisy. I'm going to find a quiet house in a small country town. I'll be alone there and I'll be able to work hard.’

His father agreed and Malcolm packed all his books and papers into a suitcase. He took a train to a small quiet town called Benchurch. Benchurch is in the country. Malcolm had never been there before.

Malcolm stayed the first night in a small hotel. The next morning, after breakfast, he walked round the town. In the quietest part of the town, Malcolm found a large, old house. The garden in front of the house was very untidy and the house looked empty. There was a shop not very far from the house. Malcolm went into the shop and asked about the old house.

‘Does anyone live in that old house down the street?’ Malcolm asked the man in the shop.

‘The house is empty,’ replied the man. ‘No one has lived there for many years. Go to the lawyer in the High Street. He knows about the house. He'll be able to help you.’

Malcolm walked back to the High Street. The lawyer's office was near the hotel. Malcolm went into the office and met the lawyer.

‘That house has been empty for many, many years,’ the lawyer told him. ‘There is a story about the house. People say strange things about it. No one wants to live there.’

‘I am a student,’ Malcolm replied. ‘I want to study hard and I'm not worried about stories. I like that old house and I want to live there. It's very quiet and I'll be able to work hard at my studies.’

Malcolm gave the lawyer enough money to rent the house for a month. The lawyer handed him the keys to the house. Malcolm took the keys and walked back to the hotel. He packed his suitcase and got ready to leave.

‘I'm leaving now,’ he told the woman who owned the hotel.

‘Are you leaving the town?’ the woman asked him.

‘No,’ replied Malcolm, ‘I'm going to stay here, in Benchurch. I have found an old house. It's very quiet and I'll be able to work hard there.’

The woman asked him about the house. When Malcolm told her, she looked frightened.

‘You can't live there,’ she said. ‘You can't live in that house. That's the Judge's House.’

‘Why are you so afraid?’ Malcolm asked her. ‘What is wrong with the Judge's House? Tell me about it.’

True or false? Give the evidence.

1. Malcolm couldn't study in that house because it was too noisy.
2. He was about to finish his studies.
3. The house had no inhabitants.
4. His family's house was not quiet enough for him to study.
5. The woman in the hotel was not afraid of the Judge's House.
6. Malcolm went to Benchurch because he liked that quiet, small town.
7. He planned to stay in that house for two weeks.
8. At first, Malcolm was not interested in knowing anything about the stories which people told about the Judge's House.
9. Malcolm was a university student.
10. The streets around the Judge's House were rather noisy.

KEY

1. FALSE: It's very quiet and I'll be able to work hard there.
2. TRUE: he was in his final year.
3. TRUE: The house is empty,' replied the man. 'No one has lived there for many years.'
4. TRUE: He lived with his family and the large house was always noisy.
5. FALSE: When Malcolm told her, she looked frightened.
6. FALSE: Malcolm had never been there before.
7. FALSE: Malcolm gave the lawyer enough money to rent the house for a month.
8. TRUE: I'm not worried about stories.
9. TRUE: Malcolm Malcolmson was a student at college. [*College* is not "colegio" but a "facultad" at university].
10. FALSE: In the quietest part of the town, Malcolm found a large, old house.