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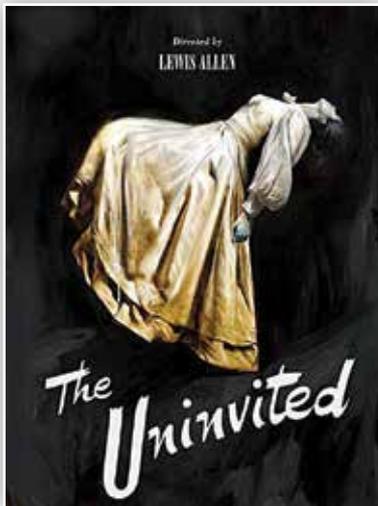
# COAST GHOSTS

**F**all will soon come calling! Cool nights and crisp days. Monarch butterflies and jumping mullet. Popcorn trees draped with crimson leaves. Friday night football. Bonfires on the beach. But Fall is a prelude to something else—Halloween! Halloween, with its ghosties and ghoulies and things that go bump in the night!

We fear the unknown, but why do we gravitate to it—that shadowy darkness at the top of the stairs or that whispered voice in the billowing Gulf mist? Perhaps someone far wiser than me can explain the psychology of fear, but for me the explanation doesn't matter. I'm one of those people who crave a good scare. And Fall nights are a good time to experience just that.

When the nights are cool and the north wind squeals around the corners of my house, I love to dim the lights, pop in a DVD, wrap up in an old quilt, and wait—wait for some flickering, black-and-white ghost tale to crackle out of my television. One of my favorite movies is *The Uninvited*. Produced in 1944, this classic ghost story is a stylish little flick. It wraps itself around an old, seemingly deserted, mansion perched high atop a cliff overlooking the Cornish coast. The house and its uninvited inhabitants are tethered to each other by the mysterious death of a beautiful lady. Eerie moans, frightful shadows, and a misty-white apparition all add to the suspense.

But you don't have to rush to the Cornish coast to get a good scare. The good old



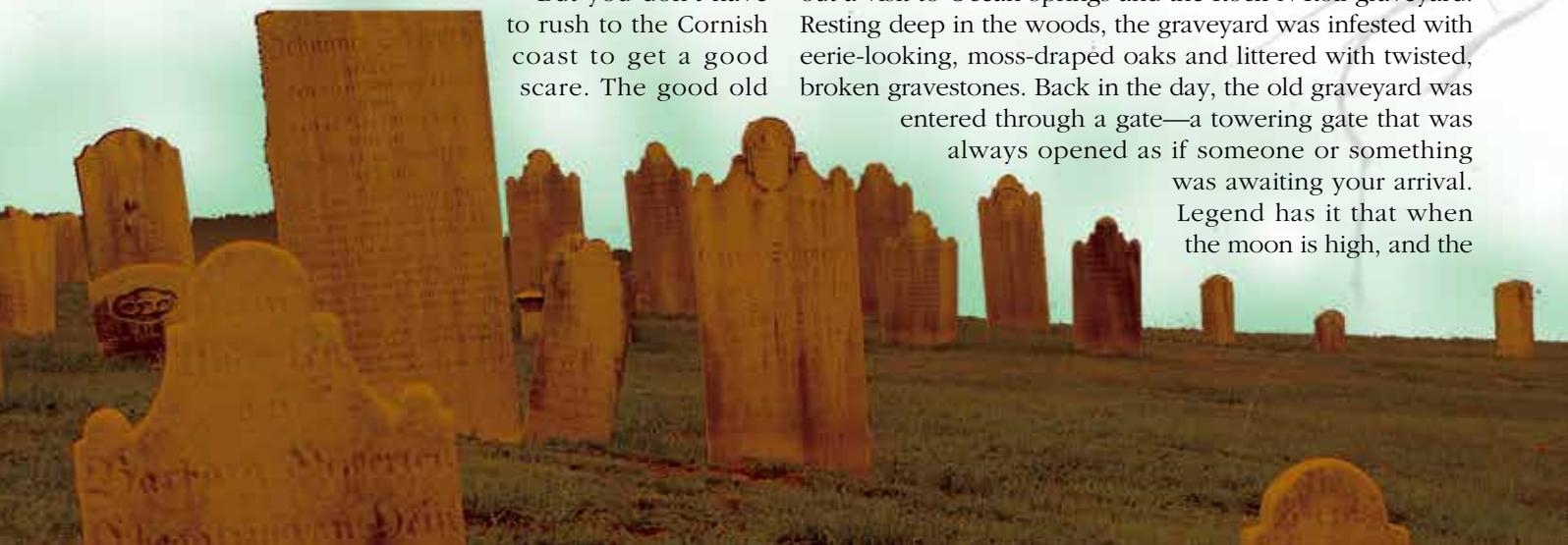
Mississippi Gulf Coast can be just as scary. It boasts a witch's brew of haunted sights all its own. From Pascagoula to Bay St. Louis there are houses, public buildings, graveyards, and rivers that hold dark secrets, sudden scares, and overpowering feelings of cold and damp.

Take Biloxi, for instance. The Marine Resource Center is rumored to have a resident lady spirit that wanders aimlessly throughout the building. Her identity is unknown, but this is known: she has on several occasions materialized, which sent a few employees home in hysterics.

Did you know that Keesler Air Force Base is haunted? There are stories told about an old barracks that boasts three roving spirits. One spirit just sits and stares at you before vanishing. Another spirit enjoys playing little pranks on unsuspecting new recruits. He turns on their radios in the middle of the night and opens windows in the dead of winter. There's also the ill-fated soldier who went through basic training at Keesler in the late 1960s, only to die of shrapnel wounds not long after his arrival in Vietnam. It appears the poor soldier can't let go of his brief and happy training days at Keesler, nor his worries over Vietnam. It is said on cold, moonless nights that his low voice can be heard coming from dark corners and down long, deserted hallways whispering, "I'm goin' to 'Nam tomorrow...."

During my youth, no Saturday night was complete without a visit to Ocean Springs and the Rock-N-Roll graveyard. Resting deep in the woods, the graveyard was infested with eerie-looking, moss-draped oaks and littered with twisted, broken gravestones. Back in the day, the old graveyard was entered through a gate—a towering gate that was

always opened as if someone or something was awaiting your arrival. Legend has it that when the moon is high, and the



mist from the bayou seeps into every crack and crevice, the figure of a diaphanous lady sitting in a diaphanous rocking chair can be seen beside an old gravestone. Once spotted, the ghostly apparition stands. She walks closer and closer to anyone fool enough to wait around. And then, so the legend says, the gate slams shut, barring the visitor's escape!

Ocean Springs may boast of a haunted graveyard, but Pascagoula can boast of an entire haunted river. Long ago, Indian tribes lived along the banks of the Pascagoula River. One tribe's chief fell in love with and married a princess from another warring tribe. But the princess was already engaged to a warrior of her tribe. She and the chief's love enraged her tribe—war clouds were on the horizon. To avoid the bloodbath that the war would certainly bring, the two lovers decided to end it by drowning themselves in the river. When they did, the chief's entire tribe followed the ill-fated lovers to their deaths, singing as the rushing river water engulfed them. To this good day, it is said that on cold, silent nights one can hear singing coming from the river—a river now also known as the "Singing River".

I've never heard singing coming from the Pascagoula River, but I have seen mysterious lights flashing in the old Gregory house that was once located in Gulfport's Bayou View neighborhood. The house, also known as the Cahill Mansion, is now gone. It burned under mysterious circumstances in the early 1970s. The land on which it once sat is now a lovely setting dotted with new homes. According to HauntedHouses.com, the Gregory house was "a dilapidated, large, dormitory-style structure three stories high."

Back in the late 1960's, a dear friend of mine lived across the street from the Gregory house. Many a chilly Fall night, she and I would sit in her front yard under a huge oak and watch what appeared to be flashes of light coming from the windows of the uninhabited third floor. My friend often regaled me with stories concerning visits she had made to the house to hang out with the Gregory's teenage children. To this good day, the stories they told her about the house make the hair on the back of my neck stand up!

There were tales of fluorescent *somebings* that walked around the teenager's beds, staring at them in the dead of night. Indescribable groans sometimes filled empty rooms. The sharp scratching of long fingernails could be heard scraping against the back of a particular headboard, which was

firmly planted against a solid wall. But my favorite story is a tale that swirls around the appearance of a fourteen-year-old boy. The boy was discovered eavesdropping on a phone conversation of a female house guest. She was talking on the upstairs phone and the boy was listening in on the conversation on the downstairs phone. When confronted by the Gregory's teenage children and asked who he was, the boy gave the teenagers a terse look, hung up the phone, and promptly vanished!

The Mississippi Gulf Coast is flush with other ghost tales. Bay St. Louis has a "haunted" bridge, complete with a female visage that rises from the swampy mist and floats along the river's edge looking for her long lost child—lost during the Great Depression when the child was hit by a speeding truck and thrown into the swamp. And then there's Pass Christian and the historic Blue Rose Mansion, which is now a premier location for tony weddings and receptions. Rumor has it that the original house, destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, was haunted by a misty lady who often appeared in a huge, gilded mirror. Late-night guests would see her in the mirror, along with their own reflections. When they would turn around to see who she was, seeing no one, they would look once more in the mirror. The lady would smile and quickly vanish.

Do ghosts and spirits haunt the Coast? Is there an old lady sitting in a rocking chair? Do the waters of a local river sing? Can you see the faint outline of a lady floating just above a bayou? Are these just urban legends? Well, come this Fall you might want to do a little ghost hunting for yourself. And after you do, remind me to tell you the story of a misty lady, Miss Cordelia, who often made herself known in an old house of mine. But that, as they say, is another ghost story for another day!

*Please remember to keep our troops in your prayers. May God bless you and keep a song in your heart.*

Kal



Anthony Wayne Kalberg

Come visit me at

[www.anthonyskalberg.com](http://www.anthonyskalberg.com)



**About the Author**

Anthony W. Kalberg was born and reared on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and has a background in the arts and stage performance.

A Gulfport resident, he had front-row seats for Hurricanes Betsy, Camille, and Katrina and survived them all. Those life-changing storms have had a major impact on both his writing and his life. *A Chasing of the Wind* is his first novel.

If you enjoy Kal's Kaleidoscope, you might enjoy his first novel, *A Chasing of the Wind*, which was released in October, 2014. You can read the Prologue at his website, [www.anthonyskalberg.com](http://www.anthonyskalberg.com).

*Book can be purchased at the Gulfport Galleria, the Southern Bound Book Store or directly from the author via his website.*

