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The Flies

If you go to the end of the road, past Collin's house, on the left you will see a field with some old fruit trees in it. A little house used to be there where a man called Davis lived. He was a very quiet man who seemed to have enough money to live on. He didn't work on the farms, but he always went to town on market days. One day, a young man came back from market with him.

The young man was pale and thin, and he didn't speak very much. He lived with Mr Davis and nobody knew if he helped with the housework, or if Mr Davis was his teacher. But people talked and wondered why they were always walking together, early and late, up in the hills and down in the woods. They suspected that the two men were playing with magic and were plotting something terrible.

Once a month, when the moon was full, they went up to a place on the hill where there are piles of old stones and rocks and they stayed up there all night.

Someone once asked Mr Davis why he went to such a dark, lonely place in the middle of the night. Mr Davis smiled and replied, 'I love old places. They remind me of the past. And the air is beautiful on a summer's night. You can see all the countryside for miles around in the moonlight.'

But Mr Davis's young friend interrupted rudely: 'We don't want other people near us. We just want to talk to each other.' Mr Davis seemed annoyed at his young friend's rudeness and he politely explained,

'People say that there are bodies under those old stones, the bodies of dead soldiers. I know farmers sometimes find old bones and pots when they are working in the fields around here. I'd like to know more about how those people lived and who their gods were. I think they probably practised magic'

Then, one morning in September, something terrible happened. A farm worker had to go up to the top of the hill, to the woods, very early, when it was still dark. In the distance he saw a shape that looked like a man in the early morning fog. As he came nearer, he saw that it *was* a man. It was Mr Davis's friend dead, hanging from a tree.

Near his feet was a knife, covered in blood. The poor farm worker was terrified and ran back down the hill to the village. He woke up some of the villagers to tell them about the terrible sight and some men went back up the hill with a horse to bring down the body.

They also immediately sent a young boy to Mr Davis's house, to see if he was at home, because, of course, they suspected that he was the murderer. When they cut down the young man's body from the tree, they were surprised to see the clothes he was wearing were all black, like the clothes that vicars used to wear many centuries ago.

When the men's horse came near the tree and the dead young

man, it screamed and tried to run away, but the men were able to hold it and they finally got back to the village with the body across the terrified horse's back.

In the village they found the young boy standing in the main street, with several women standing around him. He was as white as paper and would not say a word. When the men tried to move on towards Mr Davis's house, the horse again became very frightened. It stopped in the road and would not move.

Then suddenly it turned and tried to run, and the body of the dead young man fell off its back on to the road. The horse could smell blood. They carried the young man's body to Mr Davis's house and when they opened the door, they saw what the poor young boy had seen.

There, on the long kitchen table, was the body of Mr Davis. Tied round his eyes was a black handkerchief and his hands were tied behind his back. His chest was cut open from top to bottom and his heart was gone. It was an awful sight. The men ran outside for some fresh air - the smell of death in that room was so terrible.

Later, they put the young man's body next to Mr Davis's and they looked carefully round the house. Why were these two men dead? How did they die? In one of the cupboards they found a small green bottle of strong medicine often used to put people to sleep.

'I think that young man gave Mr Davis some of this stuff to put him to sleep,' one man suggested, looking at the bottle,' and then killed him. Goodness knows why. Perhaps he needed Davis's heart for his magic.

Then later, perhaps, he was sorry about murdering his friend and went up the hill and killed himself.' Well, the villagers decided that the two dead men could not lie in the graveyard near the church.'

They never came to church and they didn't believe in God,' they said. 'They believed in unnatural things, in magic.'
So twelve men covered the two bodies in black and took them to a place outside the village.

There they dug a big hole, threw the bodies into it and covered them with stones. People say that horses don't like going near that place even today, and there is a strange kind of light there.



In the blood there were fat black flies, feeding.

One day, some time later, some people walking along the road found a pool of blood across it. In the blood there were fat black flies, feeding. One man went to get some water and they washed the blood away, but the flies flew up into the air like a dark cloud, and flew towards Mr Davis's house.

The villagers decided that no one should live in that house anymore, so they set fire to it. The house burnt down completely, but for a long time people said that they often saw Mr Davis and the young man, standing at night when the moon was full, in the road near the burnt house on the hill.

Only the flies live there now. Perhaps it is only the flies who know why those two men played with magic and why they died the way they did.