



The Anthony Charles Wright III, museum.

From Boring to Worse!

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Maggie Williams was a friendly young woman who aspired to become an actress; she had enjoyed acting in school plays, and even attended junior college studying acting. She eventually went on to get a BFA in theater and decided to move to the big town, Hollywood, to pursue an acting career. Unfortunately, like most people who move to Hollywood, she had not had much success. Currently, she was working as a waitress in a 50's themed diner.

Somehow, waiting tables was not what she had expected when she moved out west. Maggie was sure there must be more than waiting tables, and worse still, getting stuck in the back washing dishes when the guy that was supposed to do the job didn't show. Maggie also enjoyed going to museums and touring old houses; especially old Victorian houses, there was something about that bygone era that intrigued her.

Maggie always wondered what life back then must have been like, a time of upper classes and the lower classes that served them, like maids and butlers. She imagined what it would have been like to be one of those upper class women, staying home all day and 'tending' to the house and affairs. Even if she did realize that most of the real work went to the household staff.

One day, while being particularly bored at work on a very slow day, Maggie was daydreaming about it. A customer began talking to her, asking her why she seemed so dejected. Maggie told him about her aspirations and how it was going so far. Then he asked her what kinds of things she enjoyed doing. As the man was a fair bit older than her, she assumed that either he was hitting on her, or just simply trying to cheer her up.

Upon hearing about her love of old Victorian homes and things, the man told her about a museum nearby that he always enjoyed visiting, the Anthony Charles Wright III museum. He said it was very interesting, full of old photographs of people from the era, and lots of period furnishings. He also said it was super cheap to visit, \$5 per person, for as long as you wanted to stay. She thanked him for the information as he paid for his meal and, before he left, he said, "I hope your acting career takes off soon, and maybe you will get to act in a period piece set in the Victorian era; that would be nice! At least you would get some of your questions about the time period answered."

Maggie thanked him, but thought to herself, "Yeah, that's not bloody likely." Even though she was not British, she loved the saying. Then she thanked him again and told him to come again soon. He looked back and said he would, as he wanted to see how her prospects were going. She thought to herself how nice that was of the man. Then he left the restaurant, and her day went back to being like every other day as a waitress. Scratch that, worse, her boss said he needed her to go to the back and help with dishes!

The day passed slowly, and before long she was back up front, waiting for more customers to come in; at least they helped to relieve the boredom for a while.



Maggie obsessing about how her life was simply not what she had expected.

Later that day, after work, she went back to her apartment to rest for the evening. She had the next day off, and normally would have gone out for the evening to party. But she was a bit tired and depressed and decided a good night's sleep would help her to embrace the new day tomorrow.

The next day, Maggie couldn't help but think of the nice man the day before; and his mention of the Victorian museum nearby. Maggie decided that she would use part of her fun day off work to visit the museum. The walk was not too far, about a mile from her apartment, and around 10 AM. she arrived at the location, naturally, to her frustration it didn't open until 10:30. So she amused herself for the half hour by walking around the exterior of the ornate building and looking at the details in its architecture and grounds.

Promptly as indicated, the museum opened at 10:30 and Maggie was the first guest to enter; actually, the only guest to enter at the time. Apparently it was a slow day for the museum.

The woman in the front of the museum thanked her for her support and welcomed her to the museum, she told her to feel free to stay as long as she wished, but please do not touch the exhibits. Maggie told her that she would never even think of doing such a rude thing, to which the woman replied; “Then you are an exceptional person, and a fine addition to the museum.” Maggie thought her statement was a bit odd, but then decided perhaps it was just the odd phrasing that made her notice it. She thanked the woman and said she would talk to her again before she left and let her know what she thought of their museum.

Maggie began her self guided tour, backwards of how many would do it, she went upstairs first. She enjoyed seeing the living quarters, the bedrooms, and was even impressed to find out that this; obviously wealthy, Victorian family even had indoor plumbing. She had noticed the small servants home outside the main house while walking around that morning, and thought about the people who lived within, spending their lives serving their Master and Mistress.

Surely, Maggie thought, a maid must have had to clean this bathroom daily; what a horrible life that would have been! As she continued surveying the home, Maggie observed the many photographs on the walls, mostly the wealthy family members. But she was fascinated to see many photographs of the servants, as well. It turned out that the Master of the home was an avid amateur photographer and he enjoyed taking photos of his staff. The museum had taken advantage of that and used them in a display.

When she had toured most of the home, Maggie took an extra amount of time in the parlor. It was quite nice, and the photos of the staff within were amazing. A whole wall was dedicated to the maids who had worked for the household. Again, Maggie began to think about the time period. And couldn't help but wonder what it must have been like to live back then. The idea was absurdly difficult to really comprehend since that was over one hundred years before Maggie's time and things were much different for a woman today.

Some of the maids on the wall looked friendly enough, if not a bit unimpressed at having their busy day interrupted by their Master. Obviously they had to indulge him by being the subjects of his hobby; taking away from their already limited time to perform their chores. One woman, a Laura Jones Smith, looked particularly stern. Maggie was glad she didn't have to work for someone like that; when she thought about it, her managers were relatively nice to work for.

One photograph in particular caught Maggie's attention more than the rest, the one in the center. Maggie moved in and looked more closely at the image. Something about the girl in the photograph reminded Maggie of herself; except the plaque near the photo indicated the girl was Maggie McDoogal, a poor Irish immigrant who began working for the family in 1867 and who remained with the home until her passing in 1917. Odd, Maggie thought, she had the same first name, and even looked a bit like me.

The Maids



Portrait of a woman in a maid's uniform, likely a member of the household.



A woman in a maid's uniform, likely Maggie, standing in a kitchen. She has a surprised or shocked expression.



Portrait of a woman in a maid's uniform, likely a member of the household.



Portrait of a woman in a maid's uniform, likely a member of the household.



Name Unknown
Employed: 1893-1907



Portrait of a woman in a maid's uniform, likely a member of the household.

Maggie was obsessed with the girl in the top middle photo.

Maggie had noticed that most of the women had fairly bland, uninterested expressions on their faces, but the old time Maggie looked like she was confused and shocked. The more Maggie looked into the photograph, the more she felt that she should know the woman in the photo, something about the woman was very familiar. As she stared deeply into the

photo she suddenly felt a bit dizzy, and then there was a flash. When her vision returned to normal there was a problem, a BIG problem!



Something just wasn't right!

As Maggie looked around she realized something definitely wasn't right. She was now standing in some sort of old kitchen and in front of her was a man with a huge, bulky object. In her uncertainty Maggie thought, "Is that a camera?" Then it dawned on her, as she looked down to find herself dressed in a Victorian maid's uniform; a dirty one at that. Suddenly she realized that she was the girl in that very picture she had been obsessed

with, she was Maggie McDoogal! But how could that be? She was a modern woman, or she had been! She wouldn't even be born for nearly a hundred years!

The man, whom she now realized was Maggie's Master, Anthony Charles Wright III, said, "Thank you maid! This will be a nice addition to my collection. You may now return to your chores! Pip! Pip!" Maggie was flabbergasted; she wasn't supposed to be a Victorian maid. Hell, she wasn't even supposed to be alive at that time. But no matter how much she couldn't believe it was true, there was no denying it, she was a maid, and she was trapped in the past. Then her situation really began to set in, she was a maid, a woman at a time when women could not own property, vote, or do many kinds of work; other than sewing, a few dangerous factory jobs in the textile industry, maid's work, or prostitution.

Suddenly Maggie wanted to cry. How was she supposed to live like this? She certainly didn't like being a waitress in a cheesy diner, but to be stuck as a maid in a Victorian household was even worse. She was now too poor to quit, and had no real options even if she could; other than to get married to some man who owned property and who would work to provide for her, and the family her new husband would certainly insist that she bear for him.

But, just then, her dismay was broken by a new sound that hit her ears, it was the voice of the head maid, Laura Jones Smith, the grumpy looking one. Apparently she was now Maggie's boss until the nightmare ended. Laura was yelling, "Maggie, where are ye' lass? The upstairs toilet needs cleaning, then the dishes need washing, drying, and putting away in the scullery!" And with that, Maggie knew it; she was doomed to spend her days as a simple maid, forced to follow her Master and Mistress' wishes, or the head maid's orders, and she knew that she might never have any real freedom again. Maggie yelled back, "Um... Uhh... OK... Mrs. Smith... I will get right to it!"

Then an even more distressing thought hit Maggie, unless somehow her nightmare ended, she would experience World War I from an American woman's perspective, and all the hardships that came with it. But Laura had just yelled at her again, and she sounded a bit more irritated now. So Maggie turned and began to walk to the stairway; luckily it was in the same place that it would be in the museum Maggie had been enjoying, over one hundred years from now. And as Maggie McDoogal climbed the stairs to begin her new, never ending, life of chores, commands, and duties; Maggie realized, "Hmm... Now I know why the girl in the photo looked so familiar... SHE WAS **ME!**"

Sadly for Maggie, her new reality never ended; well, at least not until she died in 1917. Of course, she told the other staff stories about the future, and how she had been a modern woman in the 21st century, cell phones, television, and air planes. But they all just laughed at her and her fantastical stories and then continued on with their work. As the decades drug on, Maggie got used to the life of a maid. She even enjoyed helping to raise her Master and Mistress' children. But she never got over the realization that in hindsight, or was it foresight; her life in the 21st century was not that bad.

For those who wonder about the change of name, when she was twenty eight, her master made her bend over his bed one day while his wife was away shopping. Nine months later, and a story about her being pregnant with a bastard child after being raped while out shopping one day; Maggie gave birth to a daughter.

Since the maid was too poor to quit working and could not own a house of her own, being a woman of course, and one who could not have afforded to raise her daughter anyway. Maggie agreed to give her child up for adoption, keep the secret, and continue to work in her present position; for the man who had raped her. After all, if she came out and said what happened, she knew it would be the word of a lowly house maid in 1879 accusing her wealthy Master of rape; and she knew who the courts would believe.

It was not an ideal solution to a problem, but these were not the best of times to be a woman and since she knew that she would not love life as a prostitute, likely her only option if she were fired. Maggie accepted her Master's idea, both to benefit her daughter, and to help keep up appearances; and his reputation. Maggie was at least reassured by the fact that the people who adopted her daughter were very wealthy friends of her Master and Mistress.

The family lived several states away, many days by carriage, far too many for her to be able to ever go visit her daughter. But Maggie knew that her daughter would be safe and grow up having a life, and social status, that was far better than that of Maggie; the simple maid, who was actually her mother. Happily, Maggie would get to meet her daughter once before Maggie died of pneumonia in 1917. Unfortunately, Maggie's daughter would never find out that the maid she had ordered around while visiting Maggie's Master and Mistress; was actually her mother. Ironically, one day many years later, one of Maggie McDoogal's descendants would name their daughter, Maggie Williams.

Even though Maggie always regretted wondering about what life in the past was like for the Victorians, her time as a Victorian maid had certainly answered any questions that she may have had about it. And with that knowledge, she never stopped thinking how stupid it was to not appreciate how good she had it when she was simply a woman choosing to work as a waitress, able to quit, vote, and own her own home. But that was simply not an option anymore for Maggie the maid.

A few people in the 21st century wondered whatever happened to Maggie, but never found out. Well, actually, Maggie always wondered about the man from the diner; his odd comment intrigued her. She always wondered if he had recognized her from her photograph on the wall? At any rate, if you ever visit the Anthony Charles Wright III museum, and notice a picture of a distressed looking maid on the wall in one of the rooms, DON'T spend too much time concentrating on it, or thinking about what life might have been like for the maid. You really would not enjoy finding out what that life was like for real! Especially not for a maid.

End.

Special thanks to Google Gemini for help creating the initial base images used to create the GIMP composite images displayed here.

What a fantastic tool, thanks again Google!

In case you were wondering about Maggie's co-workers (The cast)

Maggie Williams, a modern woman of the 21st century around whom the story revolves.

Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Charles Wright III, the Victorian era owners of the home in which the modern Anthony Charles Wright III museum resides. Master and Mistress to the several maids that worked for them over their years in the home.

Maggie McDoogal, a dedicated maid and servant, although not necessarily by choice! Born in Ireland in 1851, her family sent her to America in 1867 to serve a wealthy family as a household servant and maid. She remained with the family, serving the household, until her death in 1917. Maggie had no children, officially, but was very attached to her Master and Mistress' children.

Sara Jones, long time maid to the Mistress. Born in Ohio in 1849, she began working for her Mistress in 1863 at a very young age. She served the family until she was hired by a Mr. Joe Johnson, a wealthy gold barren who was friends with her Mistress' husband, her Master. The family was very fond of her.

Laura Jones Smith, a widowed woman who began working for the Master and Mistress after her husband died. She spent many years as an employee of the family and tended to help train many a new Maid. Her stern demeanor was always respected, if not feared, by the staff.

Clarice Edwards, was an upstairs maid who's main job was to clean and maintain the bedrooms and the, unusual at the time, upstairs bathroom. Her birth year is unknown. She worked for the household from 1877 to 1890.

Clara Clayton, a maid in the employ of the household from 1890 until her dismissal in 1901. Clara was in deep opposition to the Great War and felt that America should not get involved. Her Master, however, disagreed and the two soon parted ways.

One other maid worked alongside Maggie, but only Maggie of the past knows her name or anything about her. All information about this maid was lost to time, and the only thing the museum knows is the years that she worked for the household. (1893-1907)