

An M.R. James
CLASSIC

the ASH TREE

IN KEEPING
WITH AN OLD
TRADITION, I HAVE
A GHOST STORY FOR
YOUR CHRISTMAS
PRESENT...

IN 1690, AN
ESTATE IN SUFFOLK
CALLED FELL HALL
CONTRIBUTED A VICTIM
TO THE SERIES OF
WITCH TRIALS THEN
CONSUMING THE
DISTRICT.

WHAT SEEMED FATAL
TO THE WOMAN WAS THE
EVIDENCE OF THE HALL'S
PROPRIETOR, SIR
MATTHEW FELL.

MRS.
MOTHERSILL, ON
MANY OCCASIONS,
WOULD COLLECT
STRANGE PLANTS AND
CONDUCT MAGICK FOR
HER OWN UNKNOWN
PURPOSES ON MY
GROUNDS.





SHE WOULD
COME, ON NIGHTS
OF THE HUNTER'S
MOON, AND COLLECT
NIGHT-BLOOMING
MANDRAKES AND
MONKSHOOD...


*...AND I OFTEN
SAW HER IN THE
BRANCHES OF THE
GREAT ASH TREE
BY MY HOUSE.



"WHEN SHE SAW ME, SHE
BECAME SOMETHING
LOOKING
LIKE A HARE AND FLED!"







AHH... SUGAR AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE? OR PERHAPS YOU'VE BEEN NAUGHTY AND NASTY INSTEAD? EITHER WAY, TURN UP THE HEAT AND GET READY TO...

RUN... RUN...
AS FAST AS YOU CAN




IT'S CHRISTMAS...



IT'S CHRISTMAS, SO I BAKED COOKIES.

JUST LIKE I DO EVERY CHRISTMAS.

MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME HOW TO BAKE THEM WHEN I WAS LITTLE.



SHE SAID THEY WERE THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE.


IT WAS HER LITTLE JOKE... MY FATHER WAS... GONE BY THE TIME I WAS FOUR.

HE WAS A DRINKER, A LIAR AND A CHEAT...



A BAD MAN... A BAD HUSBAND.

I SWORE I WOULD NEVER BE LIKE HER.



BUT HERE I AM.

FOLLOWING MY MOTHER'S RECIPES.






I HAVE IT
MEMORIZED...



Six cups
of flour...
sifted.



One tablespoon each
of baking powder,
ground ginger, ground
nutmeg, ground cloves,
ground cinnamon.



ALL MIXED
TOGETHER.



IT'S IMPORTANT TO
GET IT JUST RIGHT.

MY MOTHER... SHE BELIEVED THAT EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE COULD BE USEFUL.



THAT EVERYONE HAD A PURPOSE.



SOMETIMES, THOUGH... SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO HELP THEM ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.



HELP THEM BECOME SOMETHING BETTER.



IT'S JUST A MATTER OF HAVING THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS.

