

# **Fitz-James O'Brien**

What Was It

**[ze słownikiem]**

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**C1**

Co to było?

Z PODRĘCZNYM SŁOWNIKIEM ANGIELSKO-POLSKIM

dla osób znających język angielski co najmniej na poziomie C1

Ruda Śląska, 2024

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Ruda Śląska, 2024

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# What Was It

## WHAT WAS IT?

It is, I confess, with considerable **diffidence** that I approach the strange narrative which I am about to relate. The events which I purpose detailing are of so extraordinary a character that I am quite prepared to meet with an unusual amount of **incredulity** and **scorn**. I accept all such **beforehand**. I have, I trust, the literary courage to face **unbelief**.

I have, after mature consideration, resolved to **narrate**, in as simple and straightforward a manner as I can **compass**, some facts that passed under my observation, in the month of July last, and which, in the **annals** of the mysteries of physical science, are wholly **unparalleled**.

I live at No. - **Twenty-sixth** Street, in New York. The house **is in** some respects a curious one. It has enjoyed for the last two years the reputation of being haunted. It is a large and **stately** residence, surrounded by what was once a garden, but which is now only a green **enclosure** used for **bleaching** clothes.

The dry **basin** of what has been a **fountain**, and a few fruit trees **ragged** and **unpruned**, indicate that this spot in past days was a pleasant, **shady** retreat, filled with fruits and flowers and the sweet murmur of waters.

The house is very **spacious**. A hall of noble size leads to a large **spiral staircase winding** through its centre, while the various apartments are of imposing dimensions. It was built some fifteen or twenty years since by Mr. A--, the **well-known** New York merchant, who five years ago threw the commercial world into **convulsions** by a **stupendous** bank fraud. Mr.

A--, as every one knows, escaped to Europe, and died not long after, of a **broken heart**. Almost immediately after the news of his **decease** reached this country and was verified, the report spread in Twenty-sixth Street that No. - was haunted.

**diffidence** - brak pewności, nieśmiałość  
**incredulity** - niedowierzanie  
**scorn** - gardzić, lekceważyć, wzgardzić, odrzucić, szydzić, drwić, pogarda  
**beforehand** - wcześniej  
**unbelief** - niewiara, bezbożność

**narrate** - opowiadać, opowiedzieć  
**compass** - otoczyć, knuć, dopiąć, spiskować, kompas, zasięg, zakres, cyrkiel  
**annals** - kroniki  
**unparalleled** - niezrównany

**twenty-sixth** - dwudziesty szósty  
**is in** - być w; być dostępnym, urzędować; być w domu lub biurze; wpłynąć (dokument)  
**stately** - okazały, majestatyczny  
**enclosure** - obudowa, kłauzura  
**bleaching** - wybielanie, (bleach) wybielacz, środek wybielający i dezynfekujący

**basin** - dorzecze, umywalka, basen  
**fountain** - fontanna, wodotrysk  
**ragged** - (rag) nabijać się, dokuczać, szmata, gazeta, wystrzępiony, poszarpany, umęczony  
**unpruned** - nieprzycinane  
**shady** - ocieniony, podejrzany, zacieniony, ciemny

**spacious** - przestronny, obszerny  
**spiral staircase** - schody kręcone  
**winding** - nawijanie, (wind) wiać, przewijać, pozbawić tchu, wiatr, zakole  
**well-known** - słynny, powszechnie znany  
**convulsions** - drgawki, konwulsje, gwałtowne niepokoje  
**stupendous** - wspaniały

**broken heart** - złamane serce  
**decease** - umierać, śmierć, zgon

Legal measures had **dispossessed** the widow of its former owner, and it was **inhabited** merely by a **caretaker** and his wife, placed there by the house agent into whose hands it had passed for the purposes of renting or sale. These people declared that they were troubled with **unnatural** noises. Doors were opened without any visible agency.

The **remnants** of furniture scattered through the various rooms were, during the night, piled one upon the other by unknown hands. Invisible feet **passed up** and down the stairs in broad **daylight**, accompanied by the **rustle** of **unseen** silk dresses, and the **gliding** of **viewless** hands along the massive **balusters**. The caretaker and his wife declared they would live there no longer.

The house agent laughed, dismissed them, and put others in their place. The noises and **supernatural manifestations** continued. The neighbourhood caught up the story, and the house remained **untenanted** for three years. Several persons negotiated for it; but, somehow, always before the bargain was closed they heard the unpleasant rumours and declined to treat any further.

It **was in** this state of things that my **landlady**, who at that time kept a boarding-house in Bleeker Street, and who wished to move further up town, conceived the bold idea of renting No. - Twenty-sixth Street.

Happening to **have in** her house rather a **plucky** and philosophical set of **boarders**, she laid her scheme before us, stating **candidly** everything she had heard respecting the **ghostly** qualities of the establishment to which she wished to remove us. With the exception of two **timid** persons,-a **sea-captain** and a returned **Californian**, who immediately **gave notice** that they would leave,-all of Mrs.

Moffat's guests declared that they would accompany her in her **chivalric incursion** into the **abode** of spirits.

Our removal was effected in the month of May, and we were charmed with our new residence. The portion of Twenty-sixth Street where our house is situated, between Seventh and **Eighth avenues**, is one of the pleasantest **localities** in New York. The gardens back of the houses, running down nearly to the Hudson, form, in the summer time, a perfect avenue of **verdure**.

The air is pure and **invigorating**, sweeping, as it does, straight across the river from the Weehawken heights, and even the ragged garden

**dispossessed** - wywłaszczony, wysiedlać, wywłaszczać

**inhabited** - zamieszkały, zamieszkiwać, zajmować, wypełniać

**caretaker** - opiekun, dozorca, dozorczyń

**unnatural** - nienaturalne

**remnants** - resztkę, pozostałość

**passed up** - odrzucić (np. ofertę), zrezygnować z szansy

**daylight** - światło dzienne

**rustle** - szelest, szeleścić

**unseen** - niewidoczny, bez przygotowania

**gliding** - szybowanie, szybownictwo, ślizgać, sunąć

**viewless** - bez widoku, niewidoczny

**balusters** - tralka, balas, balaska, balasek

**supernatural** - nadnaturalny, nadprzyrodzony

**manifestations** - oznaka, przejaw, objaw

**untenanted** - nie wynajęte

**was in** - być w; być dostępnym, urzędować; być w domu lub biurze; wpłynąć (dokument)

**landlady** - właścicielka, gospodyni, kierowniczk

**have in** - zawierać w sobie coś

**plucky** - szczęśliwy, dzielny

**boarders** - pensjonariusz, lokator, członek oddziału abordażowego

**candidly** - szczerze

**ghostly** - upiorny, widmowy, zmorowaty

**timid** - bojaźliwy, płochliwy, nieśmiały

**sea-captain** - kapitan statku

**californian** - kalifornijski, Kalifornijczyk

**gave notice** - notyfikować, wypowiadać; zawiadomić; give somebody notice; give one's notice zwolnić kogoś, wręczyć komuś wypowiedzenie

**chivalric** - rycerski

**incursion** - wtargnięcie, ingerencja

**abode** - przebywać, miejsce zamieszkania, siedziba

**eighth** - ósmy

**avenues** - drogi, aleja, podjazd

**localities** - lokalność, sąsiedztwo

**verdure** - zieleń

**invigorating** - orzeźwiać, orzeźwić, ożywiać, pokrzepiać, wzmacniać

which surrounded the house, although displaying on washing days rather too much **clothesline**, still gave us a piece of **greensward** to look at, and a cool retreat in the summer evenings, where we smoked our **cigars** in the **dusk**, and watched the **fireflies** flashing their dark **lanterns** in the long grass.

Of course we had no sooner established ourselves at No. - than we began to expect ghosts. We absolutely awaited their **advent** with **eagerness**. Our dinner conversation was supernatural. One of the boarders, who had purchased Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature" for his own private **delectation**, was regarded as a public enemy by the entire household for not having bought twenty copies.

The man led a life of supreme **wretchedness** while he was reading this volume. A system of **espionage** was established, of which he was the victim. If he **incautiously** laid the book down for an instant and left the room, it was immediately seized and read **aloud** in secret places to a select few.

I found myself a person of immense importance, it having leaked out that I was **tolerably** well versed in the history of **supernaturalism**, and had once written a story the foundation of which was a ghost.

If a table or a **wainscot** panel happened to **warp** when we were assembled in the large **drawing-room**, there was an instant silence, and every one was prepared for an immediate **clanking** of chains and a **spectral** form.

After a month of psychological excitement, it was with the **utmost dissatisfaction** that we were forced to acknowledge that nothing in the remotest degree approaching the supernatural had manifested itself.

Once the black **butler asseverated** that his candle had been blown out by some invisible agency while he was **undressing** himself for the night; but as I had more than once discovered this coloured gentleman in a condition when one candle must have appeared to him like two, I thought it possible that, by going a step further in his **potations**, he might have reversed this phenomenon, and seen no candle at all where he ought to have **beheld** one.

Things **were in** this state when an accident took place so awful and **inexplicable** in its character that my reason fairly **reels** at the bare memory of the occurrence. It was the **tenth** of July. After dinner was over I repaired, with my friend Dr. Hammond, to the garden to smoke my evening pipe.

Independent of certain mental sympathies which existed between the Doctor and myself, we were linked together by a vice. We both smoked opium. We knew each other's secret, and respected it.

**clothesline** - sznur do bielizny  
**greensward** - murawa  
**cigars** - cygaro  
**dusk** - zmierzch  
**fireflies** - świetlik  
**lanterns** - latarnia

**advent** - adwent, nadejście  
**eagerness** - zapal, pragnienie, ochota  
**delectation** - rozkoszowanie

**wretchedness** - niedola, nędza  
**espionage** - szpiegostwo, wywiad  
**incautiously** - nieostrożnie  
**aloud** - głośno

**tolerably** - znośnie  
**supernaturalism** - nadprzyrodzoność

**wainscot** - boazeria  
**warp** - wypaczyć, odkształcić, zwichrować, skazić, wykoślawić, osnowa  
**drawing-room** - bawialnia, salon  
**clanking** - (clank) brzęknąć, brzęk, szcęk, brzęczący  
**spectral** - widmowy, upiorny

**utmost** - najwyższy, największy, maksymalny  
**dissatisfaction** - niezadowolenie

**butler** - kamerdyner  
**asseverated** - oświadczyć, zapewnić  
**undressing** - (undress) rozebrać, rozbieranie się  
**potations** - trunek, picie alkoholu  
**beheld** - widziany, ujrzeć

**were in** - być w; być dostępnym, urzędować; być w domu lub biurze; wpłynąć (dokument)  
**inexplicable** - niewytłumaczalne  
**reels** - kołowrotki, motać, namotać, nawijać, nawinać, wirować, kręcić się, krążyć  
**tenth** - dziesiąty, dziesiąta

We enjoyed together that wonderful expansion of thought, that **marvellous** intensifying of the **perceptive** faculties, that **boundless** feeling of existence when we seem to have points of contact with the whole universe,-in short, that **unimaginable** spiritual **bliss**, which I would not surrender for a **throne**, and which I hope you, reader, will **never-never** taste.

Those hours of opium happiness which the Doctor and I spent together in secret were regulated with a scientific accuracy. We did not **blindly** smoke the drug of **paradise**, and leave our dreams to chance. While smoking, we carefully steered our conversation through the brightest and calmest channels of thought.

We talked of the East, and endeavoured to recall the magical **panorama** of its **glowing scenery**. We criticized the most **sensuous** poets,-those who painted life **ruddy** with health, **brimming** with passion, happy in the possession of youth and strength and beauty. If we talked of Shakespeare's "**Tempest**," we lingered over Ariel, and avoided Caliban.

Like the Guebers, we turned our faces to the East, and saw only the **sunny side** of the world.

This **skilful** colouring of our train of thought produced in our subsequent visions a corresponding tone. The **splendours** of **Arabian fairyland dyed** our dreams. We paced the narrow strip of grass with the **tread** and port of kings. The song of the rana **arborea**, while he clung to the **bark** of the ragged **plum-tree**, sounded like the strains of divine musicians.

Houses, walls, and streets melted like rain clouds, and **vistas** of unimaginable glory stretched away before us. It was a **rapturous companionship**. We enjoyed the vast delight more perfectly because, even in our most **ecstatic** moments, we were conscious of each other's presence. Our pleasures, while individual, were still twin, **vibrating** and moving in musical **accord**.

On the evening in question, the tenth of July, the Doctor and myself drifted into an **unusually metaphysical** mood.

We lit our large **meerschaums**, filled with fine **Turkish** tobacco, in the core of which burned a little black nut of opium, that, like the nut in the **fairy** tale, held within its narrow limits wonders beyond the reach of kings; we paced to and fro, **conversing**.

**marvellous** - cudowny  
**perceptive** - spostrzegawczy  
**boundless** - bezgraniczny, bezkresny  
**unimaginable** - niewyobrażalne  
**bliss** - błogość, błogostan  
**throne** - tron, sedes  
**never-never** - wymyślone miejsce, absurdalna sytuacja

**blindly** - na oślep, po omacku  
**paradise** - raj, niebiosy

**panorama** - panorama  
**glowing** - świecące, jarzyć się, żarzyć się, pałać, promienieć  
**scenery** - sceneria, krajobraz, pejzaż, dekoracja  
**sensuous** - działający na zmysły, zmysłowy  
**ruddy** - rumiany, czerwonawy, cholerny  
**brimming** - być pełnym, przelać się, rondo, kapelus, krawędź, brzeg  
**tempest** - burza

**sunny side** - słoneczna strona

**skilful** - sprawny, zręczny, wymagający dużej zręczności  
**splendours** - wspaniałość, świetność, przepych  
**arabian** - arabski, Arab, arabus  
**fairyland** - baśniowa kraina  
**dyed** - farbować, ufarbować, farba, barwnik  
**tread** - iść, wdeptać, zdeptać, nadeptać, krok, bieźnik  
**arborea** - ślazówka  
**bark** - zaszczekać, warknąć, łódź, kora, szczeknięcie, ujadanie, szczekanie  
**plum-tree** - śliwa (drzewo)

**vistas** - widok  
**rapturous** - zachwycony  
**companionship** - towarzystwo, asysta, asystencja  
**ecstatic** - ekstatyczny  
**vibrating** - wibrować, rezonować  
**accord** - porozumienie, akord, zgodzić się

**unusually** - niezwykle  
**metaphysical** - metafizyczny

**meerschaums** - pianka morska, fajka z morskiej pianki  
**turkish** - turecki  
**fairy** - wróżka, wila, ciota, pedzio  
**conversing** - porozmawiać, rozmawiać, odwrotność



A strange **perversity** dominated the currents of our thought.

**perversity** - perwersja

They would not flow through the **sun-lit** channels into which we strove to divert them.

**sun-lit** - słoneczny, oświetlony słońcem

For some **unaccountable** reason, they constantly **diverged** into dark and **lonesome** beds, where a **continual gloom brooded**.

**unaccountable** - niewytłumaczalny, niezrozumiały

**diverged** - rozeszły się, rozchodzić się, rozbiegać się, rozdzielać się, rozbiegać

**lonesome** - samotny

**continual** - ciągly

**gloom** - smutnieć, zaciemniać, mrok, przygnębienie

**brooded** - dumać, rozmyślać, wysiadywać, potomstwo, młode, lęg, zgraja

It was in **vain** that, after our old fashion, we **flung** ourselves on the shores of the East, and talked of its gay **bazaars**, of the splendours of the time of Haroun, of **harems** and golden palaces.

**vain** - próżny, daremny

**flung** - rzucony, cisnąć, podrzucać, rzucać, szaleństwo, przygoda, chwilowa fascynacja

**bazaars** - rynek, bazar

**harems** - harem

Black **afreets** continually arose from the depths of our talk, and expanded, like the one the **fisherman** released from the copper vessel, until they **blotted** everything bright from our vision.

**afreets** - demon, potwór (w mitologii arabskiej)

**fisherman** - rybak

**blotted** - osuszyć, splamić, przysłonić, zatrzeć, plama, skaza

Insensibly, we **yielded to** the **occult** force that **swayed** us, and indulged in **gloomy** speculation.

**yielded to** - poddać się

**occult** - okultyzm

**swayed** - kołysany, władza, trząść, rządzić

**gloomy** - ponury, mroczny

We had talked some time upon the **proneness** of the human mind to **mysticism**, and the almost universal love of the terrible, when Hammond suddenly said to me, "What do you consider to be the greatest element of terror?"

**proneness** - skłonność

**mysticism** - mistycyzm

The question puzzled me.

That many things were terrible, I knew.

Stumbling over a **corpse** in the dark; **beholding**, as I once did, a woman floating down a deep and rapid river, with **wildly** lifted arms, and awful, **upturned** face, **uttering**, as she drifted, **shrieks** that rent one's heart while we, spectators, stood frozen at a window which **overhung** the river at a height of sixty feet, unable to make the slightest effort to save her, but **dumbly** watching her last supreme **agony** and her **disappearance**.

**corpse** - zwłoki, trup, ciało, truchło

**beholding** - ujrzeć

**wildly** - dziko, wściekle

**upturned** - poprawa, przewracać, przewrócić, zadarty w górę

**uttering** - wypowiedź, (utter) wymawiać, wypowiadać, wydawać, mówiący

**shrieks** - wrzaski, krzyk, krzyczeń, krzyknąć

**overhung** - okap, przewieszka, zwieszać się nad

**dumbly** - w milczeniu, milcząco, głupio

**agony** - agonia

**disappearance** - zniknięcie

A shattered **wreck**, with no life visible, encountered floating **listlessly** on the ocean, is a terrible object, for it suggests a huge terror, the proportions of which are **veiled**. But it now struck me,

**wreck** - wrak

**listlessly** - ospale, apatycznie

**veiled** - zawołowany, zasłona, przesłona, welon, woalka