

The Man in the Green Suit

By: Austin Huibers



Chapter 1: The Lot

The lot between Number 42 and Number 44 had always been there, yet never spoken of. A rectangle of perfect grass, sharp as if measured by hand, green without blemish, flat as a carpet. It was the kind of space that should have carried the beginnings of a house-foundation, frame, or at least a “For Sale” sign. Instead, it was a silence wedged between two voices. The neighbors cut their lawns, washed their cars, and pulled weeds, all while ignoring the patch that needed no tending. No one could recall who owned it, or if it had ever been sold.

The children knew better.

They whispered of the house-low, careful words exchanged at the bus stop or while riding their bicycles past Number 42. To them, the lot was never empty. A one-story house stood there, squat and ordinary, its siding faded in some places, neat in others. Toys littered the porch. A swing swayed though no one pushed it. Windows glimmered faintly, like eyes catching the light.

Adults only saw grass.

Timothy Holden was eleven when he first admitted what the others only hinted at. “There’s a man inside,” he said one evening, voice hushed as though someone might overhear from the shadows. He described him in detail: a man in a dark green suit, tall, lean, with a face that seemed carved to reassure. His smile was warm, his voice melodic. He asked questions as if he truly cared about the answers.

Yet Timothy also told them this: whenever he caught the man’s reflection-in a mirror, in a window, even in the silver bowl of a spoon-the smile was broken. The eyes burned red, the teeth too sharp, the skin stretched wrong. The reflections told the truth that the face concealed.

Most of the children pretended not to believe him, but still they lingered outside the lot longer than they should have, peering into the air where their parents saw nothing. The younger ones were drawn to the playland inside, the rainbow of toys scattered across the floor. They swore the air smelled of candy, of bubblegum, of all things sweet and harmless.

And slowly, one by one, they began to step through the grass.

What they did not know-not yet-was that no one over the age of eighteen could see the house. The doorway closed at adulthood, as though innocence itself were a key. And what lived in that place, that impossible structure, had no use for grown men and women.

It had a hunger for children.

Chapter 2: The Invitation

It began simply. The children-Timothy, Clara, and two others-stood at the edge of the lot after school. The sunlight had not yet faded, but the shadows stretched long across the neighboring lawns. They lingered, shifting their weight from one foot to the other, exchanging glances that carried both fear and excitement.

Then the lot shifted. Not visibly, not with a sound, but in the quiet certainty of perception. The grass rippled like water underfoot, and there, in the middle, the house appeared.

It was as Timothy had described: a low, one-story home with tidy siding, windows catching the sun in a way that made them almost impossible to look at directly. Toys were scattered across the yard as though waiting for hands to pick them up. A swing moved slightly, though no wind touched it.

A man stood on the porch.

He wore a dark green suit, tailored to the smallest detail, the kind of suit a man might wear to dinner if he wished to impress strangers he would never meet again. His face was composed, smooth, and entirely inviting. A smile curved his lips; a kind, careful smile.

“Good afternoon,” he said. His voice was soft, but precise, like the ticking of a clock that knew the hour exactly. “I’ve been expecting you.”

The children froze. None of them had said anything aloud-how could they? The adults in their lives saw only grass. Only they could see him.

“I am very glad you came,” the man continued. “Come inside. There is much to show you.”

He did not beckon with his hand. Children simply found themselves moving forward. The door opened before they touched it, and the first step into the house felt like stepping into another world entirely. The air smelled of candy, of polished wood, and something faintly metallic that Timothy could not name.

Inside, the house was ordinary and extraordinary all at once. The walls were painted in muted colors that seemed almost to glow. Toys were everywhere: blocks, balls, stuffed animals, and games that seemed impossibly large. The floor was soft beneath their feet, padded, as though to cushion any fall. Laughter filled the rooms-some real, some a memory of what laughter ought to sound like.

The man in green spoke again. “This is your world for as long as you wish. No one else will come here. Adults cannot see you. They do not understand.”

Timothy’s eyes caught the reflection of the man in a silver toy drum. His face, the same face that had smiled at them, now twisted. Eyes blackened. Teeth jagged. The jaw stretched unnaturally. The reflection grinned.

The man turned away as though nothing had happened. “Do not worry about mirrors. Some things are best ignored.”

And still, they did not leave.

Because the house promised something that reality never could: a place where they belonged, where adults did not interfere, and where time could bend to their desire.

But the lot waited outside, green and perfectly empty, ready to erase all evidence of their presence at the slightest glance from a parent.

Chapter 3: The Rules of Play

The first day inside the house passed without remark from the children. There were no clocks, yet they had played until the sun dipped low, painting the lot beyond the windows in gold and shadow. The man in the green suit moved among them quietly, observing, smiling, occasionally offering a block or a ball. He never corrected them, never punished; he simply was, and they played.

“It is easier this way,” he said once, when Timothy hesitated before a set of intricate building blocks. “Rules are for those who do not understand. Here, you need only play.”

Timothy looked around. The other children nodded, their hands full of toys, faces bright with excitement, though tiredness tugged at their limbs. He asked, cautiously, “Are there no adults here? No parents?”

“Adults,” said the man, “cannot see this place. They never could. They do not need to. You are here because it suits you. It suits me. Do you understand?”

Clara, who had been silent until now, whispered, “What if someone tries to leave?”

The man’s smile widened, warm and precise. “There is no need to leave. Everything you want is here. Outside is... ordinary. Inside is always enough.”

And indeed, the house seemed enough. Candy appeared in bowls that were empty moments before. Toys rearranged themselves to suit the children’s interests. A ball rolled just where it was meant to be caught. The light shifted subtly to follow their movements.

Yet Timothy noticed small things that were off. A toy drum would reflect the man’s face, and in it, the grin was wrong. Teeth sharp, eyes dark. He blinked, and the reflection corrected itself. He told himself he must be imagining it.

Time moved differently inside. An hour outside could be a minute inside. Children who had eaten lunch still felt hunger, but when they opened the cupboards, they found candy and fruit that was fresh and sweet. They did not remember ever opening the cupboards before.

And the rules were simple, though unstated:

1. Play. Always play.
2. Do not question. Adults cannot see.
3. Time bends to desire.
4. Mirrors lie.

By evening, when Timothy looked back at the lot from a window, he saw grass. Perfect, unmoving, ordinary. No trace of the house, no trace of the toys, no trace of the man. His parents would walk past, nodding to neighbors, unaware.

The house was a secret that existed only for those under its spell.

The children did not yet know that once they turned eighteen, the secret would vanish entirely. The lot would remain. The house would vanish. And the man, the man in green, would not forget them.

Chapter 4: Forgetting

It began slowly, imperceptibly.

Timothy noticed first. One afternoon, he tried to remember what he had for breakfast that morning. He could not. He tried harder, straining to recall the taste of toast, the shape of his cereal bowl, the sound of his mother's voice in the kitchen-but the memory slipped away, like sand through his fingers.

Clara noticed something different. She could no longer picture her own birthday party from last year, the one with balloons and cake. She remembered the cake itself, sweet and chocolatey, but not whose faces had been around it. A fog had settled over her recollections.

The others began to forget in their own ways. Names of classmates, favorite books, even the route to their school became hazy. The man in the green suit observed silently, his smile never faltering.

"You are here," he said one evening as they sat on the carpet with blocks scattered across the floor. "That is all you need to remember. Everything else is unnecessary."

The children accepted the explanation without question, though unease prickled at the back of their minds. The house provided what they wanted: toys, candy, amusement. Yet each day brought a subtle emptiness, a sense that something precious was being stripped away.

When Timothy glanced into a toy drum, he saw the man's reflection again-eyes black, teeth jagged-but the others did not notice. They were too absorbed in play. He thought about telling someone, but who could he tell? Outside, the adults saw only a vacant lot. Even if he screamed, they would hear nothing.

And the man, always calm, always kind, continued his work. The rules were clear: play, and forget. The children were safe, they were happy, and yet something essential was being quietly harvested.

By evening, when they returned to the edge of the lot, grass stretched perfectly between the houses. Their parents called them home, unaware of the day's peculiarities. The house inside their minds felt real, but outside, only ordinary lawn remained.

And still, none of them could shake the feeling that what they were losing was far more valuable than candy, toys, or laughter.

The first child who would vanish completely was yet to come.

Chapter 5: The Disappearance

It was Clara who vanished first.

One afternoon, the children were scattered across the playroom, chasing balls and stacking blocks. The man in the green suit observed quietly from a corner, adjusting a toy robot as though it were part of the furniture. When Timothy turned to speak to Clara, she was gone.

“Clara?” he called. His voice echoed through the rooms, bouncing off walls, but there was no answer. The blocks tumbled from his hands, clattering to the floor.

The man in green approached, smiling. “She has gone to play elsewhere,” he said softly. “Do not worry. She will return when it is time.”

Timothy’s stomach turned. “Elsewhere? Where? We’re all here!”

The man’s smile did not falter. “She is learning. That is all. You will see soon enough.”

Timothy searched the house room by room. Every corner was filled with toys, yet every room seemed smaller than the last, as if the walls had shifted when he wasn’t looking. He found a small door, previously unnoticed, leading to a dark hallway. Faint cries drifted from it, almost swallowed by the hum of the house.

When he called out, the man’s voice replied from the opposite side of the room, calm and even: “It is best not to enter that hallway. Some games are not meant for observation.”

By evening, when the children returned to the edge of the lot, grass lay undisturbed. Parents called them home, voices gentle, unaware of the disappearance. Clara’s name was spoken less and less, and Timothy noticed his memory of her fading, like ink being erased.

The man in green continued to smile. Always smiling. Always patient.

And Timothy realized, with a sinking certainty, that the house did not just offer fun. It took. It collected. It claimed.

Somewhere inside, Clara was still there. But the house had begun its work, teaching the children the first lesson of survival in a place where adults could not see and where innocence was the currency.

No one outside would ever notice.

Chapter 6: The Inscriptions

The discovery came slowly, almost by accident.

Timothy had wandered down a narrow hallway, the walls pressed in close and painted a pale yellow that seemed to pulse in the fading light. The man in the green suit had been elsewhere, humming quietly as he arranged a line of blocks along the floor. Timothy's hand brushed against the wall and the texture was wrong. Smooth, but beneath it, faint scratches caught the dim light.

He knelt to inspect them. Names. Hundreds of them, etched with varying degrees of care, dates trailing into the past: 1942, 1957, 1969. Timothy traced one with his finger, then another. Each seemed older, more worn. The deeper into the hall he walked, the more names appeared. He could feel the presence of something watching him, but the man in green was nowhere in sight.

"Timothy?" whispered a voice. It was soft, fragile, as though it had traveled decades just to reach him.

He turned, startled. A pale girl stood in a doorway, eyes wide, almost translucent. "You can see it too," she said. Her voice trembled. "The names... they all belonged to children who came here. Children who stayed."

Timothy swallowed. "Stayed... or...?"

The girl shook her head. "Some... some never left. You can see the house until you are eighteen. After that... you forget. That is why no one saves us. The adults... they cannot see what happens here."

The hallway seemed to stretch. Walls shifted imperceptibly as Timothy stepped forward, and the scratching of names grew louder, like a whispering tide. He touched another name: February 1974. He did not know the child, but he felt a strange, hollow connection-as if the fear and joy of that long-ago child lingered in the paint itself.

From behind him, the man appeared suddenly, smooth and calm. "Curiosity is natural," he said. "Some things are meant to be seen. Others... merely acknowledged."

Timothy noticed the man's reflection in a polished toy drum nearby. The friendly face was gone. Eyes black, teeth jagged, jaw stretched impossibly. He looked away quickly, trying to steady his racing heart.

"You see?" said the man. "Mirrors lie."

The girl placed a hand lightly on Timothy's shoulder. "The names... each child left a part of themselves here. Some stronger, some weaker. The house keeps what it needs."

Timothy looked down the hallway again, trying to count the scratched names, but they stretched infinitely, hundreds into the darkness. He realized that every generation of children had left pieces of their youth behind, each of them feeding the house, feeding the man in green.

"You must play," the man said softly, as though reading Timothy's thoughts. "It is the only way to survive here. And you will."

Timothy felt a chill. The toys, the candy, the laughter-everything that had seemed harmless now bore a different weight. The house was not just a place for fun. It was a trap.

And yet, he could not leave.

Outside, the lot remained unchanged. Perfect grass stretched between the houses, empty and ordinary. Adults walked past, oblivious. They could not see the house, could not hear the whispers, could not know the danger their children faced.

The girl leaned closer. "Remember this, Timothy. The house exists only because we believe in it. And when we stop... it begins to weaken. But some of us never stop entirely."

Timothy swallowed hard. Somewhere deep in the house, Clara waited. Somewhere, the other children waited. And the man in the green suit watched silently, smiling, collecting, always patient.

Chapter 7: The Hunger of the Man

The house seemed quieter that afternoon, though nothing had changed. The toys remained in place, the candy in its bowls, the colorful blocks stacked with impossible symmetry. But the children felt it immediately—a weight pressing down from the walls, the ceiling, even the air itself.

The man in the green suit moved among them, slow, deliberate, his hands folded in front of him. His smile remained gentle, kind, as if he were explaining the rules of a simple game to children who did not yet understand them.

“You are here for a reason,” he said softly. “I do not mean harm. I mean only to care for you. To help you grow.”

Timothy felt a chill. He glanced at Clara, who stared at the floor, lips pressed tightly together. The girl from the hallway, pale and trembling, had warned them. And yet, even now, her words felt distant, like a half-forgotten dream.

“I am very old,” the man continued. “Older than you could imagine. I have walked through more generations than this house could ever contain. And I must feed, as all things must. Youth, innocence... it sustains me. It gives me the ability to remain here, to protect you, to guide you.”

The words were soft, polite, reasonable. But the children felt the gravity beneath them, the inevitability in the careful syllables. He was not cruel, he insisted—but necessity was a quiet and unyielding force.

Timothy remembered the names in the hallway. Hundreds of children, etched into the walls. Names of those who had come before them, whose innocence had been quietly consumed. The house was patient, the man even more so. He did not take by force, not directly. He took by promise, by trust, by attention. By belief.

The children tried to pretend, as they always had, that nothing was wrong. They laughed with blocks, they chased balls, they ate candy that never seemed to end. And the man in green smiled, observed, and collected—without haste, without cruelty, only with the precision of one who had done this many times and would do it again.

Timothy’s reflection in the toy drum caught his eye once more. The friendly face of the man shifted, jaw stretching, teeth glinting sharp, eyes black as ink. Timothy looked away quickly, heart hammering. The others did not see. They could not see.

“You must play,” the man said again, voice lower now, carrying a weight beyond words. “And you must not leave. There is no safety outside these walls. Only here do you belong.”

And the children obeyed. Always obeyed. They could not resist. It was the rule of the house, the law of the lot, the gravity of the man in green.

Outside, the lot remained perfectly still. Adults passed by, heads down, words measured, blind to the subtle horrors hidden in plain sight. The man’s hunger was quiet, patient, inevitable. And the house, full of laughter and toys and light, fed him day by day, child by child, until no one remembered the world beyond its walls.

Timothy wondered, as he stacked another row of blocks, how long it would be before the house demanded more. How long before he, too, became part of the names scratched into the walls, whispering through the paint for the children who came after him.

And the man in green smiled, as always.

Chapter 8: Illusion of Safety

The house had grown quieter. Or perhaps the children were simply quieter, their voices lower, their laughter tinged with something Timothy could not name. Each room seemed more ordered than the last, toys aligned in perfect rows, candy bowls filled, blocks stacked at precise angles. The perfection was unsettling.

The man in the green suit appeared as if from nowhere, hands folded, voice smooth and calm. "You have grown so well," he said. "It is because you are learning. Because you are here."

Timothy's stomach tightened. Something was different. He could feel it. The toys, the candy, even the blocks seemed to respond to the man's presence-moving subtly, arranging themselves as though aware of his eyes. He touched a ball, and it rolled perfectly into the boy's hands as if guided by invisible strings.

"You see," the man continued, "nothing here is random. Nothing here is wasted. Every piece has its purpose. Every child... has theirs."

Timothy swallowed hard. Clara's eyes flitted nervously across the room, her fingers fidgeting with a stuffed rabbit. She whispered, "It's too perfect. Something's... wrong."

The man's smile never faltered. "Safety is an illusion, children. You are protected here, yes-but protection comes at a cost. You must trust me. You must play."

Timothy glanced around. The house was filled with joy, yes-but the joy was curated. Each laugh, each smile, was subtly guided, coaxed. Blocks fell in patterns he could not create. Candy appeared at the exact moment he felt hungry. The swing moved just enough to be irresistible.

And in the silver drum in the corner, the reflection watched. The inviting face of the man warped once more: jaw stretching, eyes black, teeth sharp. Timothy's heart raced.

He tried to speak, to warn the others. "We... we shouldn't-"

The man's voice stopped him mid-word. "Shh. That is unnecessary. You are safe. You are here. That is all that matters."

Timothy realized then: the house controlled them not through fear, but through comfort. Through pleasure. Through the illusion of safety. The children were free to play, free to eat, free to laugh-but every step, every choice, had been guided by the man in green.

And the lot outside remained ordinary. Perfect grass, no trace of the house, no trace of the children's days inside. Adults passed without notice, blind to the careful consumption of innocence that occurred just beyond their eyes.

Timothy looked down at his hands. The toys, the candy, the laughter-they were beautiful, yes-but they were not theirs. They were the house's. The man's.

He wondered, for the first time, if escape was even possible.

The man in green approached quietly, voice soft: "Do not worry, Timothy. You are learning. You are safe. You are mine."

And Timothy felt the truth of it, heavy and cold: the house had been waiting for them all along.
And it would not let go.

Chapter 9: Fractures

The house, once endlessly inviting, began to show cracks. Not in the walls or ceiling-those remained perfectly painted, unnervingly flawless-but in the children themselves. Timothy could feel it first, a tug at the edges of his memory, a whisper of something lost.

He remembered his mother calling him for dinner, though he had no idea when this had happened. He remembered the smell of toast on a Saturday morning. Small, insignificant things but they were anchors, pulling him toward the world outside.

Clara, too, began to notice. She hesitated before a toy train, her hands shaking slightly. "I... I don't think this is right," she whispered. "I think... I think we're forgetting too much."

The man in the green suit appeared quietly behind them, his smile perfectly calm. "Forgetting is natural," he said. "The past is messy. Here, you are whole. Here, you are safe. Here, you belong."

But the children were beginning to resist. They started to whisper to one another about the names in the hallway, about Clara's memory of birthdays and Timothy's memory of breakfasts. They began to notice the reflections-the warped, sinister versions of the man in mirrors and shiny toys.

Timothy approached a drum, heart hammering, and touched the silver surface. The reflection stared back at him: teeth sharp, eyes black, jaw stretching. He yanked his hand away.

"He's not... he's not normal," Clara said, voice trembling. "We can't stay here forever."

The man's smile did not waver. "Normal? No. I am older than normal. I am necessary. You are safe, and safety comes at a price. You will learn this soon enough."

For the first time, the children understood the full measure of the house's danger. It was not violent. It did not need to be. It did not force them; it shaped them, lured them, collected them, piece by piece, until they were part of it, and it part of them.

Timothy looked toward the hallway where the etched names ran infinitely. Some names were faded, almost erased, swallowed by time. Others glowed faintly, as if alive. He realized then that if they stayed, they too would be added. Their laughter, their innocence, their memories-all would become part of the house, part of the man in green, and eventually... nothing would remain of who they had been.

Clara reached for his hand. "We have to leave," she said firmly. "Before it's too late."

But the man in green moved closer, still smiling, calm, patient. "Leaving is unnecessary," he said. "You are safe. You are protected. You are mine."

And Timothy felt the first real surge of fear in his life. The house was no longer a playground. It was a predator. And he understood, with a cold certainty, that survival would require more than play. It would require cunning, courage... and perhaps, betrayal.

The children glanced at one another, understanding the same thing silently: the time for innocence was ending. The time to fight had begun.

Chapter 10: The Last Day

The house waited. Always patient, always perfect, always hungry.

Timothy and Clara had stopped pretending. They whispered to each other, memorizing every corner, every toy, every crackless wall. They had traced the hallway of names again, counting the etched generations, and the weight of what the house demanded pressed against them like a storm cloud.

The man in the green suit appeared in the center of the playroom, calm and unwavering. “You have grown strong,” he said. “Very strong. But strength does not change what is necessary. Play. Learn. Belong.”

Timothy’s hands shook as he lifted a block, a small rebellion. “We... we don’t want to belong,” he said. “We want to go home. We want to remember.”

The man’s smile widened, almost imperceptibly. “Home... memory... those are fragile things. They slip through your fingers easily. Here, you are real. Outside, you are nothing. Nothing lasts. But here... here lasts forever.”

Clara stepped forward. “But at what cost? We forget who we are! We... we lose ourselves!”

The man tilted his head, thoughtful. “Some things must be lost to gain safety. Some things must vanish to become whole.”

The children realized the truth too late to be comforted: the house had been feeding for decades, shaping generations, collecting innocence like a gardener collects seeds. There was no malice, only inevitability.

Timothy felt a cold certainty in his chest. The lot outside, with its perfect green grass, waited silently. Neighbors would walk by tomorrow, nothing to see, nothing to hear. The children inside would disappear without a trace.

He turned to Clara, whispered, “We have to try anyway. Even if it fails... we have to try.”

The man watched quietly. “Try,” he said softly. “But remember: what is yours will never fully leave this house. And what belongs to me... always returns.”

The toys seemed to shiver. The walls seemed to stretch, shadows bending toward the children. Even the candy bowls trembled on their own. Timothy and Clara moved together, stepping toward the small door at the end of the hallway, toward the uncertain daylight beyond.

The last thing they saw before the reflection of the man in the drum appeared-jaw stretching, teeth glinting sharp, eyes dark and infinite-was his smile. Gentle, inviting... and impossibly patient.

Outside, the lot remained ordinary, waiting. Waiting for the next child, the next generation, the next game.

And somewhere in the house, the man in green whispered to himself, almost with affection:

“Play... always play... and always return.”

The door creaked open. A sliver of sunlight fell across the polished floor. Timothy and Clara stepped forward.

The house exhaled.

And the grass beyond, untouched, seemed to pulse with the promise of eternity.

Author's Thoughts

I wrote The Man in the Green Suit to explore how innocence can be quietly shaped, controlled, or taken-often without us noticing. The man in the green suit and his house aren't just scary; they're a reflection of the hidden pressures kids face and how curiosity, trust, and bravery collide.

This story is open to interpretation. Maybe the house exists only in the children's minds, or maybe it's everywhere childhood meets control. Either way, it's about noticing what's hidden in plain sight-and questioning what we take for granted.