

Paxton's Story

*'Do you want to see a doctor?' Long asked.
'No, no,' the young man said. 'I ... I'm afraid.'*

It's a cold night. Come in and sit down. Don't be **afraid**. That noise is only the **wind** in the trees. Please listen to my story.

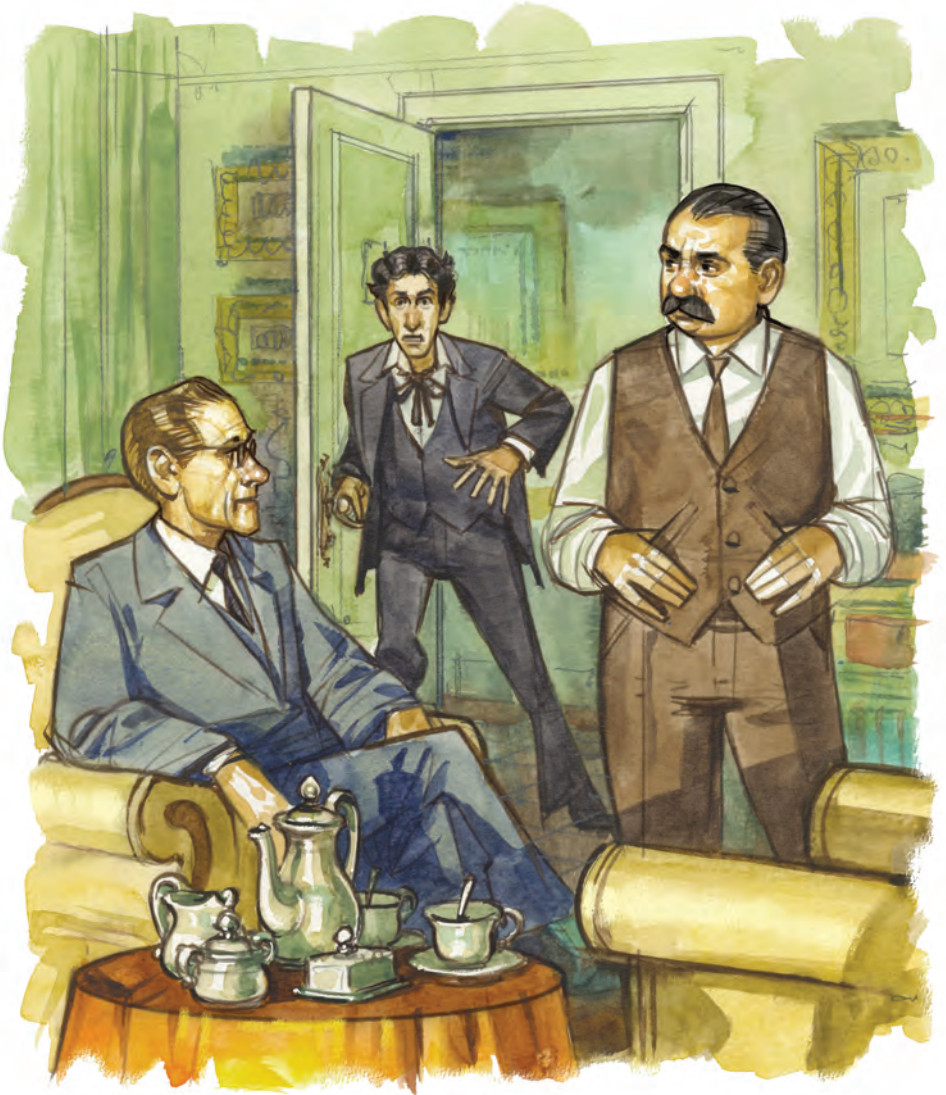
It started on a dark, dark night in Seaburgh. Do you know Seaburgh? It's a small English town near the sea. There's a train station near it, and there are some houses and shops. There's one small hotel. The **beach** is good and long, but the sea is usually very cold. (That isn't a problem for me. I don't like swimming!)



afraid /ə'freɪd/ (adj) I never go in the sea because I am *afraid* of water.

wind /wɪnd/ (n) The *wind* is very strong; that tree is going to fall.

beach /bi:tʃ/ (n) Let's go to the *beach* and swim in the sea.



I was at the hotel there with my friend, Henry Long. It was cold that April and there weren't many people in Seaburgh. That was good for us because it was quiet.

It was a good holiday. Every day Long and I walked near the sea. In the evenings we liked to sit in the hotel and talk.

Suddenly, one evening, there was a noise at the door. A young man opened it.

‘I’m sorry,’ he said to us. ‘Please excuse me.’

‘That’s OK,’ I said.

‘Come in,’ Long said.

The young man came into the light. He was short and he had dark hair. I looked at his unhappy face.

‘What’s wrong?’ I asked. ‘Are you OK?’

‘Do you want to see a doctor?’ Long asked.

‘No, no,’ the young man said. ‘I ... I’m afraid.’

‘Why?’ Long asked.

The young man didn’t answer my friend’s question.

‘Sit down and have a drink,’ I said. ‘What’s your name?’

‘Paxton.’

He didn’t say his first name. (I don’t know it today.)

‘What’s wrong, Paxton?’ I asked.

The young man looked at me and then at Long. His eyes were big and his face was white.

‘You don’t know me,’ he said.

‘I understand that. But please **believe** me. Please.’

This was very important to him.

Then Paxton started his story.

Long and I listened for a long time.

Here is his story.



Paxton was on holiday in Seaburgh, too. He liked old buildings, and there were a lot of them near Seaburgh.



believe /br'i:li:v/ (v) His friends *believe* his story, but the police don't.

One day he went on his bicycle to a **church** near the town. It was a beautiful small church.

There was an old picture on it with three **crowns**. It was very interesting and Paxton wanted to know about it.

There was an old man in the church garden.

‘Excuse me,’ Paxton said. ‘What do you know about this picture?’

The old man **put** down his **spade** and looked at the young man.

‘Do you know the story of the three crowns?’ he asked.

‘No,’ Paxton answered.

‘Seaburgh was always an important place,’ the old man said. ‘It is today, too. It’s important because it’s on the sea.’

‘I don’t understand,’ Paxton said.

‘The English wanted to **protect** their country from countries across the sea,’ the old man said. ‘They put three crowns in the **ground** near the sea. One of the crowns was here, near Seaburgh.’

‘But why?’ Paxton asked. He didn’t understand. ‘What did three crowns in the ground do?’



church /tʃɜːtʃ/ (n) There are a lot of people in the *church* on Sundays.

crown /kraʊn/ (n) In the picture, Elizabeth I has a beautiful *crown* on her head.

put /pʊt/ (v, past) I *put* my bag under my chair but now it isn't there!

spade /speɪd/ (n) I have three *spades* because I am a builder.

protect /prə'tekt/ (v) It is a thin coat but it *protects* me from the rain.

ground /graʊnd/ (n) There was a lot of water on the *ground* after the rain.



‘The three crowns were **magic**,’ the old man said. ‘Their magic protected the country.’

‘Do people believe that?’ Paxton asked with a smile.

‘Many people here in Seaburgh believe it,’ the old man answered.

‘But do *you* believe it?’ Paxton said.

The old man looked at the dark sea. His eyes were dark, too. He didn’t answer Paxton’s question.

‘And where are these crowns now?’ Paxton asked.

He looked at the water, too. There was a boat on the sea. It was small on the dark water.

‘That’s a difficult question,’ the old man said. ‘One of them is in London now. Every day people on holiday can go and look at it. One of the crowns is in the sea. Now only one crown is in the ground. But its magic is working today.’

‘Do you know about the **last** crown?’ Paxton asked. ‘Where is it?’

‘I don’t know that,’ the old man said.

magic /ˈmædʒɪk/ (adj/n) You can’t see it because it is a *magic* hat!

last /lɑːst/ (adj) What time is the *last* bus at night?



‘Who knows?’ Paxton said.

‘Only the Agers family.’

‘Who are they?’

The old man looked into Paxton’s eyes.

‘Agers is a very old name in Seaburgh. The Agers were a family here for many years. Families come and go. But the Agers always stayed. They never moved away.’

‘Why not?’

‘The men of the family had a very important job.’ The old man was quiet now. ‘The crown protected the country, and the Agers protected the crown.’

Paxton didn’t believe the old man’s story, but it was very interesting to him.

‘Where are the Agers?’ he asked. ‘Can I talk to them?’

‘The Agers can’t answer any questions about the crown now,’ the old man said. ‘William Agers was the last person in the family. He lived near here. But he isn’t talking now.’

‘Why not?’



Suddenly it was very quiet at the church. The old man put his hand on a **gravestone**. He looked at Paxton’s face. His eyes were cold now.

‘You aren’t from Seaburgh,’ he said. ‘Go back to your hotel. Don’t think about the crown again.’

‘I’m sorry,’ Paxton started, ‘but ...’

The old man didn’t listen. He walked away from Paxton and from the church.

‘What did I say?’ Paxton asked. Only the wind listened to him. Then he looked down at the gravestone.

WILLIAM AGERS

This was William Agers’s gravestone. The man was dead! Who protected the crown now?



gravestone /'greɪvstəʊn/ (n) His mother is dead and this is her **gravestone**.

2.1 Were you right?

Look again at Activity 1.2 on page iv. Are your answers right? Finish the sentences with the words on the right.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Seaburgh is a small town | a comes into their room. |
| 2 The writer and Long | b about three crowns. |
| 3 They like walking | c protected the crowns. |
| 4 A young man | d near the sea. |
| 5 The young man's name | e are on holiday. |
| 6 He talks to them | f is in the ground. |
| 7 One of the crowns | g on the beach. |
| 8 The Agers family | h is Paxton. |

2.2 What more did you learn?

Write the names under the pictures. Then write the right letter.



church







- 1 Paxton asks the old man about this.
- 2 The old man is working with this.
- 3 Its magic protects England.
- 4 Agers's name is on this.
- 5 Paxton visits places on this.
- 6 This old building is near Seaburgh.





2.3 Language in use

Look at the sentence in the box. Then put these words in the sentences.

There was an old man
in the church garden.

in near about at to for with on

- 1 The writer stays at the hotel*with*..... Henry Long.
- 2 Seaburgh is a small town the sea.
- 3 Only one crown is the ground.
- 4 The Agers family lived in Seaburgh many years.
- 5 This story is a magic crown.
- 6 Paxton goes to the church his bicycle.
- 7 The two men listen Paxton's story.
- 8 Paxton looks down the gravestone.

2.4 What's next?

Paxton is thinking about the crown. What is he going to do now? What do you think? Look at the picture and write in the words.

story find crown dead interesting
questions protects family



This*story*..... of the crowns
is very I have a lot of
..... I want to know
about the Agers
William Agers is
Who the last
..... now? Where is it?
Perhaps I can it!