

McIsaac and The Flying Horse Hair Mattress

It is the spring of 1979. I am standing in the inner courtyard of Gate House looking out towards the entrance arch, which as you recall is below the clock tower.

Headmaster Roy McIsaac is showing some prospective parents around the school in the hope that they will send their child to Clayesmore. Chatting with his guests he leads them towards Gate House.

Up in the clock tower dormitory, which is fairly high up as it is directly beneath the clock, a horse hair mattress is on the move. Why it is on the move and in the direction of the open dormitory window, only the owners of the hands that are bearing it know. What isn't known is that McIsaac and party are now strolling directly beneath clock tower. Certainly no one thinks to look, but then reason at this point and place in time is an orphan.

I watch the McIsaac procession stop, blissfully unaware as I of the mattress that is now hanging dangerously from the clock tower above them, as unaware as the clock tower crew who are now struggling to control the heavy weight they have placed through the window.

Momentum carries events to their conclusion and the mattress drops. There is a tremendous pwhump and a cloud of dust envelopes McIsaac and parents. The mattress lies on the ground directly behind them as it has narrowly missed them by inches. These lucky, though now very dusty three, stare upwards, mouths agape, at the gawking faces that are now staring down from the clock tower. McIsaac attempts abject apology as the ex-prospective parents proceed to dust themselves off.

Did you know that Captain Skinner (then Gate House master) had a rack of canes not unlike a gun rack? Well, no one else did until that evening when all six perpetrators where caned with 3 swipes of the most carefully selected cane.

Michael Crofton-Atkins (78 - 80)