

14th September 1833

St Andrews, Scotland

Honoured Founder,

I offer my sincerest thanks to you for considering my humble application for the position of Researcher at your acclaimed Institute. I believe I would be extremely well suited to the role due to my experience researching esoteric matters at the University of St Andrews. Unfortunately, my peers at the University do not have as much respect for this area of study as we do, so a position at The Magnus Institute would allow me to fully explore the topics that others disdain, and realise my true potential as a scholar.

My academic credentials speak for themselves. In 1821, I received a first-class Bachelor's degree from the University of Cambridge in History, with my main area of study being supposed supernatural occurrences in 16th century in England. Despite being inundated with false or dubious accounts, I also found several primary sources which detailed fascinating phenomena that could be corroborated by other eye witnesses. In particular, the theatres on London's South Bank seemed to be a locus for occurrences associated with the unfamiliar and the uncanny, which often affected performers and audience members. For example, one account tells of a young woman who was led away from a performance of *The Tempest* by a masked stranger in unusual garb, and was never seen again.

I continued my studies at the University of Cambridge, reading for a Master's degree in the same subject, and this is when I had my own encounter with supernatural forces. Taking a stroll through a cemetery on the outskirts of the town, I could have sworn I heard a muffled cry, but had no idea from where it could be

emanating. On closer inspection, there seemed to be a grave with disturbed earth, and this was where the sound was loudest. It reminded me of a mewling infant or perhaps an animal in distress. As I bent down to examine the grave further, to try and determine whether it was merely a freshly dug or whether something was amiss, I was grabbed by the leg and pulled down into the soil. I felt sharp claw-like protrusions digging into my flesh as I was dragged deeper and deeper, and soon I could not see, nor breathe. By some miracle, the gravedigger heard my cry of shock and managed to grab my hand, just before it was pulled away into the ground. I demanded that he dig up the grave and investigate whatever had assaulted me, but all we found was a coffin, two years old (according to the gravestone) and largely intact. I still bear the scars from the strange clawed hand to this day.

Of course, this experience led me down an intriguing path of research, which led to the discovery of several incidents in that same cemetery, going back at least two centuries. I had to be careful about how I presented this research to my fellow scholars, for fear that they would not take it seriously. Therefore, I had to describe these incidents as recurring legends rather than verifiable occurrences. Despite my fears, I was awarded a pass with distinction in 1824 and sought to pursue my research further afield.

After moving north to St Andrews, I was awarded my doctorate in Esoteric History in 1828, and offered a position as a lecturer. As I delved deeper into stranger and stranger stories of terrible, disturbing events, it grew harder to frame my studies in a way that would appease my narrowminded colleagues. Last year, I found some invaluable evidence of a ritual which took place in Ayrshire in 1743, which involved terrible acts of violence and

brutality. When asked to present my findings to my peers, some were so shocked that they nearly fainted. Although I had rigorously checked my sources and offered solid evidence, they dismissed my work and assumed that I had fabricated this ritual for my own depraved pleasures.

This is one of the main reasons for my application to the Magnus Institute. I would relish the opportunity to work with colleagues who understand my work and do not cast aspersions on my character when I follow a serious line of enquiry. I am also, of course, a great admirer of your work and the Institute as a whole, and I believe I would make an excellent addition to your staff.

I am truly grateful to you for considering my application for this position, and hope to hear from you soon.

Yours very sincerely,

Dr Eustace Watford

*JM:*

*Well, the "Honoured" is a nice touch. Impressively well-informed in some matters, but far too caught up in his "true potential as a scholar." Suspect that his obsession with the approval of others would get quite tiresome as well. Too Close I Cannot Breathe will likely return for him in any case - almost certainly in the sights of the Desolation as well if he's been looking into Ayrshire. Will be curious to see how long he lasts, though not curious enough to bring him into the fold.*