

# THE MYRTLES PLANTATION

*for The Midnight Society*



*presented by*

**KIRA BUTLER**

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# INTRODUCTION

Being in the market of writing dark fiction, it follows that much of my time is spent mired in the shadowy stuff. What you have in front of you is the results of my efforts researching, documenting, and dallying in everything from the arcane to the supernatural.

I've been writing fiction for several years, and have acted as a contributor for a number of online publications in the same timespan. Where possible, articles have been researched and referenced with citations.

You're holding a sampling of the the fun stuff that fuels my practice that other institutions, organizations, communities, and blogs were kind enough to publish.

If you'd like to work with me, make a suggestion for future articles, or alert me that the world is ending and I ought to backup my hard drive, feel free to send a note.

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# THE MYRTLES PLANTATION

*for The Midnight Society*

Since I was twelve years old and I put down the *The Witching Hour* by Anne Rice for the first time, I've had a love for the South. The swamps with cypress trees draped in Spanish moss, the balconies jutting over the narrow streets of the French Quarter in New Orleans, the slow dirge of jazz music played on the way to a funeral. The above-ground cemeteries. Sweet tea and humidity and a clean sweat on a spring morning. Gas light and the perfume of magnolia trees on a slow evening stroll through the Garden District.

If I lived a past life or three, I'm sure one was spent on the banks of the Mississippi river.

On today's trip into our catalogue of famous hauntings, I'd like to transport you to a spot in St. Francisville in Louisiana, not so far from Baton Rouge. Today, the house that claims our interest functions as a bed and breakfast, and guests visit with the hopes of stirring up the spirits who occupy building that was once named Laurel Grove when it was built in 1796.

There are no less than twelve ghosts that occupy the former plantation house.

## **FAMOUS HAUNTINGS: THE MYRTLES PLANTATION**

For our purposes, the first and most famous of the hauntings at Myrtles date back to its second owner. Clarke Woodruff married into the Bradford family by way of David Bradford's fourteen year old daughter. The couple managed the estate following Bradford's death, but not all was marital bliss.

Woodruff took a mistress from among the slaves of the plantation — a girl named Chloe. To disguise their affair, Woodruff moved Chloe up to the house proper with the excuse of having her care for the Woodruff children. Attempting to gain an advantage of the situa-



tion, Chloe spent time eavesdropping on Woodruff's guests. Being a judge, the company he kept was often formidable — the nature of these discussions rather sensitive. Perhaps not the most prudent of decisions on her part, as inevitably, Chloe was caught; her punishment was the price of her left ear cut from her head and banishment from the main house.

Sent back to the plantation to work, Chloe was forced to wear a handkerchief to cover the wound, but as they do, some scars run deeper than the flesh.

Chloe longed for the comfort of her former position, and so she conspired to move back to the main plantation house and resume her care of the children. When Woodruff's daughter's birthday rolled around, Chloe volunteered to make the cake. She laced the confection with a poison brewed from Oleander leaves with the intention of making the children sick. As their health failed, she planned to administer an antidote and appear to miraculously cure them.

Tragedy struck when Chloe miscalculated the dosage, and effectively killed both children and Mrs. Woodruff herself with the poisoned birthday cake.

Chloe fled to the swamp, and when Woodruff returned home to find his family dead, he hunted down his former mistress and strung her by the neck to hang from a tree in the swamp where she was discovered.

They eventually cut her down, stuffed her pockets with rocks, and her body was disposed of into the river.

She never really left, however.

Stories of Chloe's presence in the house began to circulate among the staff and family shortly after. Today, the house is locked up at night, and housekeepers return to find furniture rearranged.

During tours, as women pass through the doorway to the gentleman's parlor where Chloe was once caught eavesdropping on Judge Woodruff's guests, earrings are often removed from ears by unseen fingers — but only just one. The staff regularly finds these mementos in the strangest places, and write it off to the fact that while Chloe loves earrings, she only needs to take one from guests since she only has one ear.



## FOOTNOTES

“The Myrtles Plantation.” The Myrtles Plantation. Web. 31 Jan. 2015. <<http://myrtlesplantation.com/history.html>>.

“Myrtles Archive — Steel Town Paranormal.” Myrtles Archive — Steel Town Paranormal. Web. 31 Jan. 2015. <[http://www.steeltownparanormal.com/index.php?p=1\\_70](http://www.steeltownparanormal.com/index.php?p=1_70)>.

“A Ghost Story From The Myrtles Plantation.” A Ghost Story From The Myrtles Plantation. Web. 31 Jan. 2015. <<http://www.ghostinmysuitcase.com/places/myrtles/>>.



# ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

*The Midnight Society*

“Famous Hauntings: The Myrtles Plantation” was written by Kira Butler, and appeared at  
*The Midnight Society* on January 31, 2015.

<http://midnightsocietytales.com/2015/01/31/famous-hauntings-myrtles-plantation/>



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kira Butler writes speculative fiction for adults, new adults, and young adult readers. She especially appreciates dark urban fantasy and low key horror, and likes to write about everything in between. She lives in Montreal, where she is working towards the completion of her first young adult horror novel.



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