

THE RED HOUSE BONES

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The Red House in Port of Spain is the biggest and most important building. It is our Houses of Parliament, where the government does its work.

One hot, sunny day, construction workers Michael, John, and Keshana, were digging deep down under the Red House which is very, very old and needed to be repaired.

“Aaaah! Look!” Michael suddenly screamed and he scrambled out of the hole. The other workers jumped out too as Michael called Mr Steven, the site manager.

“Mr Steven, look, I see a set of bones down there! I think it’s human bones. I not going back in there!”

While Mr Steven was trying to see what Michael was talking about, he accidentally fell into the hole where the bones were.

It was dark down there and Mr Steven stumbled as he stepped on the bones. He fell, landing on his face, right on top of a skull. As his sight adjusted to the dim light, he saw that the place was a grave full of bones. He tried to stand up and felt the pain in his ankle. He realised that he had twisted it. He had also broken his cell phone, which had fallen out of his pocket.

Suddenly, Mr Steven became afraid and started screaming, “Help! Get me out of here!”



“Frank! Frank! Help me! I can’t walk,” he called his supervisor. He was surrounded by skeletons.

Frank had just gone to lunch, so he was not around for the drama.

“Call an ambulance. I have no money on my phone,” said Keshaua to Michael, who used his cell and telephoned the emergency line, 999.

Mr Steven was very relieved when the Ambulance and Fire Services arrived and used a sling and ladders to lift him out of the hole. They took Mr Steven to the hospital. With the two bosses out of the picture Michael, who discovered the bones, did the talking.

“I was shovelling concrete chunks,” he told the reporters, “when I see a face from a horror film looking at me. Only black space for eyes and grinning with half de teeth missing,” he said, “but when I look good, I see about two or three of dem between de concrete casting. Dey mus’ be hundreds o’ years old.”

The police sealed off the area with yellow tape. The very next day, archaeologists from the University of the West Indies in St. Augustine and other experts came to run DNA tests on the bones to discover where they came from.

For several months professors and their students were busy scraping the ground and taking samples away in bags. Then one day they made an announcement that the bones belonged to Amerindians, the people who had lived in Trinidad over 5,000 years ago, millennia before Christopher Columbus and the Spanish arrived in this part of the world.

Many people of Amerindian descent live in Arima. They were very excited about the find and came to Port of Spain with their Shaman to bless the bones. The Shaman looked around at the bones and told them all that this had once been a holy burial ground. He gave a warning to all present.

“Be careful. We must remember to give respect to the bones. These are our ancestors, the first people.”

The Shaman told them that bad things would happen to anyone who harmed the bones and disrespected them in any way.

An archaeological search was started to find and save the bones. When all were gathered, the Shaman performed a ceremony, and the bones were removed and displayed in the Trinidad and Tobago Museum and Art gallery for all to see.

THE END

