



The Shelter

Completed: 30-01-2022

During the war, a group of stranded soldiers seek shelter in an old abandoned mansion. Despite the haunted settings with its evil resident, the Band of Brothers finds a way to get

through the long and cold winter night. This project is the fourth in a series of Gothic winter tales, and once again, we explore the boundaries between fiction and reality, horror and lust.





Battleground

The settings and models

The main stage for this story is a plain and dreary landscape. Abandoned trenches and a ruined village reveal that a war is going on. It's a no man's land. The enemy is nowhere to be seen, and the landed soldiers continue their journey unhindered. They're looking for a shelter to stay the night, and a map guides them to an abandoned lunatic asylum. It's an old and ruinous building, with empty corridors, dark cellars and large stately rooms. Remnants of old furniture remind of its former owners in better times. But the place is not uninhabited. For in the dark shadows dwells an evil creature.



Albert Mansion

For the exterior of the building, I used an adjusted version of a model called *Albert Mansion*, a haunted house at the edge of the dark swampy forest.



Most of the interior was created with elements of the model *Abandoned: Home Sweet Home*, a rundown hallway with a staircase and large panelled doors. Several elements were used to create the other main rooms as well. For the cellar and kitchen, I used *The Beast Beneath*, a model of an old basement with a big coal furnace. All gloomy, rundown and ruinous, so, these models are all perfect elements for this spooky adventure.





Percy

Niko

Max B & Max A

Roman B

Roman A



Vernon

Dragan

Michael

The characters

From the circa 20 soldiers I used for this series, 15 were fully developed into distinctly recognizable characters. Their names indicate the original DAZ 3D models their features were based on, all belonging to the same Genesis 8 family.

The soldiers are dressed in World War II U.S. uniforms, which gives some indication of the historical settings.

At the beginning of the project, several of you noted that all soldiers had the same rank of Staff Sergeant, which is indeed a bit unlikely. I'm not at all familiar with the military ranking system, so I'm most grateful for your comments, and I immediately demoted the whole group



Alexei

Alistair

Dain

Archie

Kargath

Kwan



to Corporal and Private. I'm not so sure they are that grateful as well...

Archie is the main character of the story, and we follow him from the landing of the troops till their departure from the haunted mansion at the end of the series. Archie always looks somewhat timid and scared, as if he feels an ominous presence lurking in the dark. But nothing scary seems to happen to him. On the contrary, instead of facing evil in the eyes, he stumbles into erotic encounters with several guys at different places. His adventure even ends with a New Year's Eve party orgy with the entire group.



Archie



Band of Brothers - US television series



US WW2 Uniform Paratrooper Expansion



Creating a series with such a large number of characters is always a nice challenge, but it can be a bit tricky as well. The crowded scenes at the dinner table and the afterparty were peculiarly demanding. The files for these images just became too big for the system to process. So, to get this done, I had to break these scenes up into different parts (men in the foreground, men in the background and the room itself), render them separately, and in the end, paste them all together back again into a single image.



It took me a while to find the right ghost for this story. I'm not sure what I had in mind, but this time I wanted something that stayed more in the background, like a dark shadow or an evil presence backstage. Then I stumbled on the character in *The Nun*, a tiresome and unscary horror movie, where a demonic nun terrorizes a monastery in far-away Romania. This movie is not something to waste your time on, but the evil nun really stood out for me, and I think her twin sister also did a good job in my series.



In the end, we never get to know what really happened at that mansion. Is the ghost just a frustrated voyeur that seduces soldiers to make love to each other? Or are these events only the vivid imagination of the main character? It remains a mystery, and by the end of the series, it's even not even clear if the haunted house really existed at all. For somehow, when all the soldiers depart, the building just seems to vanish into thin air. But whatever happened at that place, it's clear that the Band of Brothers had a great time at The Shelter and that they had an eventful beginning of the New Year.

