

The Manor

Seven o'clock, indicated the gorgeous clock of the town church, that people could barely see because of darkness. The sun was shining for the last minutes of the day and a huge mass of cloud was coming from the north, sign that it will have a storm this night.

"Brrr, I should hurry, I don't wanna be alone in this cold night" I mumbled, putting up my collar on my neck.

A lot of thoughts came to my mind during my walk towards Alan's manor. I'm very excited to see him, I haven't met my uncle or my aunt Susan since I was only six years old. I have very good memories of this place, of the great green garden with beautiful flowers and splendid tree. I remember when I played with Pudding the big dog, and he always licked my face. And obviously I miss my uncle's generosity and happiness.

The wintry cold brought me back to reality : I was in front of the portal of the residence. I felt an horrible expression on my face. The first thing I noticed was the garden. Nothing was like in my memories, the arid land only let some weeds grow and the trees were all agonizing slowly, only shaken by the wind.

"Why did they let all the vegetation die ?..." I thought with disappointment.

About fifty meters behind the portal sadly stood the manor, coated by many invasive plants. The shutters were for the most closed, therefore no light came from inside the building. I stayed without moving a few minutes, when the sun disappeared and let me in almost total darkness. I opened the rusty portal carefully and entered the field. Shadows of the naked tree scared me and made me accelerate a little to reach the big wooden door.

I knocked the door and right after I heard the sound of steps approaching. The familiar smiling face of my uncle was kinda reassuring after the spooky garden I just crossed.

"Cara, you grew up a lot !" marveled Alan, inviting me to enter with his arm.

When I entered the manor, the light instantly dazzled me and I was forced to close my eyes.

When I accustomed to the ambient light, I admired the entry corridor : nothing had changed. The big chandelier was shining, and was the origin of the high brightness. All the family portraits were exactly aligned and clean. There was no dust at all. The only apparent different thing was a little black and white picture where I can discern my aunt and my uncle.

A little candle was burning in front of the little frame illuminating the face of my aunt Susan and her beautiful deep black hair.

"Do you want me to show you where you will sleep tonight ?" asked Alan, noticing my wonder.

"Yes please, I'm not sure to perfectly remember the house" I said, a smile on my face.

My uncle guided me through the house and showed me the different rooms. After the visit of the groundfloor, something seemed to be missing.

"Where's Susan ?" I asked to my uncle, realizing I hadn't seen her.

"She is missing... Two years, Susan and Pudding just went out to the forest... And never came back..." announced my uncle, trying not to cry. He lowered his head sadly, lost in his memories. When he came back to reality, he turned back and asked me to go out to search some logs before the storm. I accepted, hearing the discreet sound of a tear falling on the floor.

Apparently, they were in a wooden hut in the garden. With a candle, I walked shuddering because of the cold wind on my face. I reached the hut and noticed that it was bigger than I expected. The heavy door did not opened easily but I finally entered. Inside, there was about a thousand logs, I just had to take some of them. Behind me, I heard the door creaking and closing, creating an air flow that extinguished my candle.

"NOOO !" I shriek, trying to open the door with all my strenght. Unfortunately, I was stuck.

After I tried to call Alan's help, I started to look for another exit. Nobody could hear me here, I had to go out alone. There was no window at all and the darkness did not allow me to see the ceiling at all. I could barely see right in front of me.

I was touching all the walls with a little hope to find a hole or something like this when a violent thunderbolt fell at some meters of the hut. This very high sound scared me : what if another

lightning fell on the hut and make it burn ? Hearing the rain sound was soothing, I sat down in a corner of the hut. If a fire started, the rain would extinguish it. Lost in my thoughts, I wondered.

"Will Alan notice I'm missing ?"

"Even if he notice, how will he come for me with this storm ?"

"Will I die ?"

Thinking about all of that, I passed my hand on the floor by rote. I felt a cold thing, that seemed to be a metallic handle. A hope wave expanded inside me and I pulled the trapdoor with a new determination. There was an incredible hidden passage here. An old ladder that didn't seemed strong sank into total subterraneous darkness.

It was my only chance to get out, so I decided to go down. After a few seconds, I reached the ground. I walked into a tunnel and arrived to a room. That room was a laboratory.

"Is that Alan's laboratory ? He never spoke about that..." I thought, fear replacing hope inside my heart.

My heart seemed to stop when I saw the experiments. Panic invaded me and froze me : I couldn't move at all. The laboratory contained circular and translucent tanks filled with greenish liquid. The more horrific thing is that there was a strange body in almost every tank. I moved in front of the nearest. Watching the strange creature, I guessed it was a strange fusion between a cat and an insect. It had black ears and fur strangely associated with insect mandible and paw.

"How is that horror possible ?..." I mumbled, shocked and walking in front of the next tank.

"Is it really my uncle who did that ? Why did he create monsters !?" I asked loudly, arriving to the tank.

First, I saw the bottom of the creature, apparently a dog body. As and when I looked up, I noticed the top of the creature was human.

"I'm dreaming... Or I'm becoming crazy ! It's impossible !" I screamed, collapsing on the floor, totally desperate.

The deep black hairs of the monster were softly floating into the liquid. These deep black hairs...

"No, it can't be what I think... It can't be Susan's hair ! My aunt..." I said, crying and punching the floor.

It was very painful but I didn't care at all. All I could think at this moment was that my uncle, I loved so much, has transformed my aunt into this monster ! My uncle, who used to take me to walk around in the woods. My uncle, who taught me to cook delicious cakes. My uncle, who always smiled and made me smile too. My uncle, who was now the most terrifying thing of the entire world. I conceived his kind face become an evil face, his smile became diabolic smile.

I suddenly heard the sound of the trapdoor above the tunnel.

"Cara, are you here ?" asked my uncle.

I was terrified, no muscle was able to move. The sound of his steps on the ladder made an echo in all the tunnel. I had to move now ! If I don't hide, he will transform me into a monster too !

Fear is the greatest engine in the world, fear succeeded to make me move behind a desk. But fear also made me shiver, and allowed me to think of all that would happen if Alan caught me.

"Cara, I know you are here... It's just a waste of time so show yourself now !" said Alan, walking in the laboratory.

I didn't answer, trying not to make any sound. His steps were getting closer to me. I closed my eyes.

"You can't understand why I did that and created these... Monsters !" he affirmed.

I felt his hand on my back and screamed.

"Why ? Why did you create this horror ? Tell me anyway ! There is no valid reason at all to justify these acts !" I replied with rage.

"No pain, no gain. There's no evolution without sacrifice. If I want improve human's capacity, it's the only way. These fusions will revolutionize the world. It's the law of the science. I sacrificed so much... I'm now able to become a new human" said Alan with determination.

"You are totally crazy..." I mumbled. My fear at this moment was the biggest fear of my whole life. My limb didn't move. My body didn't try to escape. It was the end.

"It's time now. Good night Cara" he said, putting a wet tissue on my nose.

I felt like I was falling asleep. It was very relaxing. It was like a slide into cotton.

When I finally open my eyes, I was in the greenish liquid.

And I was not Cara. I was a monster.