

Sewer Drains

&

Lighthouses

Tales of Terror vol. 1

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A Bad Dream

Some refer to the night as a time where bad things happen; monsters, abusive husbands, murder, date rape, and all those things that go bump in the night. What was the saying I heard, "Nothing good happens after midnight." I think that depends on how one looks at it. Right now I am watching the most beautiful woman in the world sleeping in our bed.

The moon light is making the walls and the objects it hits a light blue. *Blue is her favorite color.* She is curled up in our bed with the sheets off of her. The white night gown I bought her last year was perfect on her; covering her in the right places while allowing not much to the imagination. The bottom part is pushed above her panties. She was wearing the pink tangas that I love. You know the ones, where they are higher cut in the back so they show more ass cheek and have the bikini cut in the front, thus showing off more of the rear. Just the thought of those on her makes me want to go over and molest her.

She lay in our bed shifting her legs around and crying. I keep hearing soft sobs coming from her. I can't see her face but I know how it probably looks. I've seen it too many times not to imagine it. "I miss you," she says to herself. I miss you too and I am sorry I can't hold you right now. *Why can't I?* I'm not sure how to move in this new body. I try walking towards her but I can't see my legs right now, it just looks like mist. The question is "how am I standing?" She moans and all I can think is that she wants me inside her, but I can't. I'm dead.

I never believed in a Heaven or a Hell when I was alive, but I figured there was something to the afterlife. The lurking spirit was not what I thought would happen though. I wonder if should could see me. Perhaps if I tried real hard to communicate she would hear something. I tried to tell her I am here but it came out in a faint whisper. Maybe that's why ghost hunters need special equipment to catch voices. This was a nightmare in of itself. On the other hand, I get to see my wife again. I suppose something is better than nothing. At this point in my afterlife I can't be too picky. Taking things into perspective, the last thing I saw was my wife's face as I died, which had a look of confliction. She didn't seem to know what to do as I choked to death on my food that evening.

Filet mignon and potatoes au gratin with wine was on the menu that night. We have been having our marital issues at this point. Finger pointing and the blame game were our daily events we partook in. "You are never around," she would tell me and I would tell her,"

You aren't the same person I married!" Now that I have time to think on it, maybe her personality change was partly my fault.

We were well off. When I say "well off," what I mean is that I was a day trader. I made my money studying the money conversion rates from all over the world and invested money into one country's currency while it was low and then traded for a country that was higher, thus making a profit. I was good at it. I was never good at much in my life, but if there was one thing to excel in, this would be one of the best. Making thousands of dollars in one day was the goal.

I started my "career" from home right after we got married. I had my Business degree from Cincinnati University for about a year at this point and my wife had just received her Communication degree. Out of the both of us I knew I had to be the provider because most don't do shit with communications. I had the better chance of a career than she did.

She was into the arts; movies, books, music and other things. I liked those things as well but got lost in my own success as time went by. This isn't a complaint, I loved that about my wife, and I wanted that to stay the same no matter what. Just because I went into a new direction for our future; I never wanted her to change who she was; however, she did change as my wealth grew.

As the money came in, more things were "needed;" trips overseas, gym memberships, expensive wines and cheeses. I think she had watched too many television shows where people live in great homes but seemingly never work and have all the time in the world to spend with their friends. I think deep down she honestly thought that was what life was meant to be. The problem was that she didn't have any friends to go out with, even with all of her free time. So that translated in over compensating with trivial things that don't mean anything. When she started driving the fancier cars and nice clothes, then the "friends" started to come into play. She started to attend fundraisers and country clubs on what seemed to be on a weekly basis. While I became a millionaire, she became a socialite.

I was not particularly the greatest person in the world either. I worked long hours and I drank, a lot. I went out with my friends from college after work. I am not sure why I did that. I think I didn't want to grow up and face the reality that I was an adult and my wife was starting to talk about kids. The nights I was home, I sat and watched television or played a videogame. Whenever she would announce that she was going to bed, implying that she wanted to have sex, I just told her I would be up after the show or after I finished a level. The truth was I never finished an episode or a level; I just continued onwards and let her fall

asleep. I never wanted her to know that having children was not on my “to do” list. That was wrong of me and I know that now, but now it is too late for that.

“I want to see you again,” she said out loud. I watched her shift in the bed. The blue hue that that moon was creating never toned down her hair. Her red hair was the only color besides blue I could see in the room. It flowed over the pillow she was laying on beautifully. I wanted to climb into bed and lie down next to her. I attempted to move to the bed but I couldn’t move. I just stood in the corner of the room near the dresser like a stalker. I heard the resolve in her voice determined to see me or something signifying that I was here, in our bedroom. I turned my head around to left then my right; if I could tap on the walls maybe that would get her attention. I reached my hand towards my left and slammed my hand against the wall only for it to go through it like a ghost can. “Shit,” I muttered to myself. There had to be a way for me to communicate with her, I just needed to find out how.

“Okay, I’ll see you soon,” she said.

What did that mean exactly? She turned over in her bed and I saw her face for the first time since I choked on the piece steak. It was the same as I remembered. She got out of bed and walked out of the room. I heard her walk down the stairs and mess with locks to the front door. “What the hell is going on,” I thought to myself. She then came back upstairs and went to the mirror on our dresser. She was right there, right there next to me. I reached out to her and placed my hand on her shoulder. I concentrated hard to make it noticeable for her, but she didn’t feel it. The only thing that could signify that may be here was the cold that engulfed her. When she walked near me, I could see her breath and when she was in bed there was none. I made her cold and uncomfortable, but she would never know that it was me.

She pulled out her makeup and started to doll herself up for something. She put on a light pink lipstick and some eyeliner. I looked over to the nightstand next to her bed and saw an empty pill bottle. She was never on any medication that I could remember. Wait. She had issues sleeping at one point and was prescribed some medication for it. That couldn’t be the same bottle, could it? No. There is no way in hell that she would...no. I watched her get dolled up for some reason, but the only thing that came to mind was for the people that could find her body if she died from overdose. She did say, “I’ll see you soon,” after all. I couldn’t believe this. She was way to Catholic to think that she would go to Heaven for suicide. This is not her at all. Did she lose her faith? I’m not in Heaven or Hell right now, just some sort or purgatory. Maybe her belief is right. I am not really one to say.

After she was done putting on her makeup, she stared at herself for a while. She started messing with her hair, placing it in certain ways over her shoulders. She grabbed her breasts and lifted them up. If she was going to kill herself, why even bother with the way she looked? Nothing was making sense. I don't recognize this person right now. She looks the same but she is acting in a way that is foreign to me. She stared at herself again and pulled down her panties. She looked at her crotch like she was doing an inventory. It was shaved. I had never saw it without hair before and it was beautiful. I was used to red pubic hair on her vagina so I never noticed the freckle that was on right side. As many a times I had been down there performing oral on her, one would think I would get some glimpse.

She put her hands on it and felt it. She shifted her right hand to her clit and started rubbing it with her pointer and middle finger placing it between them. She started rubbing it vigorously in the pale moon light. She placed her left hand on the dresser to hold herself up while she masturbated in front of the mirror, next to me. Her hair moved to cover part of her face as she got into it. She was biting her top lip as she was starting to climax. Then she stopped herself. Why would she do that? She stood up straight and ran her hands through her long red hair. The light bounced off her pale skin as she walked bottomless back to the bed and lied down on her side of the bed. She lay back against the headboard with her legs spread. I could see the glow from her sex fluids all over her taint. My first typically would to go and have my way with her, but I didn't. Well, I couldn't anyway, I don't think. I just admired her from a distance now. I had her at arm's length a second ago and like some cruel joke I couldn't touch her or feel her.

She picked up the pill bottle and studied the label for a moment before she threw it down on the hardwood floor. I was then sure that she had taken the bottle and was trying to die because she felt like she had too, for me. That's not what I wanted for her or anyone else. Even if she could be an apparition like me now, we wouldn't be able to hold one another. Hell, I'm not sure we could even talk to one another. This isn't what she thinks it's going to be and I need to keep her awake.

She looked down at the bottle in such disdain and calls the pills "a waste of money." Out of all the things she has gotten, why is that a waste of money?

Hopefully she doesn't waste the money that I had left her. The ten million dollars should be more than enough to sustain a lifestyle that is better than most. Of course there is nothing that I could do about one way or the other. The high society bitches will probably make sure that she loses the money in an attempt to feel superior. That's the only thing these bitches do; talk about one another and like any two-faced persons, they will pretend to be

each other's friend until one of them loses their money and they can ignore them. That is what my wife will be facing and more than likely fail at it. All I can hope for it that she invests it well and pursues the dreams she had when we were in college.

She tilts her head back and stretches her body across the bed. I watch as her breasts ride from putting her arms above her head and all I can think of are sucking them in that moment. Even as a ghost I am still sort of a pervert, but is it perverted when it's your own spouse? If I were looking at another woman doing the same thing it would be a perversion. I almost wonder if I'm really dead and if this is all just a dream. I don't remember dying and I don't recall seeing my own funeral at this point. One would think that perhaps I would be able to see other things being a ghost and all, but I haven't. I am stuck in this personal hell of watching my beautiful wife pleasuring herself when I am not around; not in the way I should be.

I start attempting to knock on the wall again to garner some attention from her. I kept putting my hand through the wall. It started to get frustrating because I knew, for some reason, that I should be able to make contact in some regard. I make a fist and my own fingers go through my palm. Goddammit! I try again putting all my thought into it. Here we go. Wait! I can feel my own hand again. When the realization comes to me to attempt to knock on the wall, I hear a knock from somewhere else. What the hell is that?

My wife puts a robe on and scurries down the stairs of our home. I cannot move from my spot right now or else I would have traveled with her. Why is she answering the door at this time of night? Nothing good ever happens after midnight. As she goes to answer the door, I notice her cell phone on the bed. When was she talking on that? It occurs to me that she may not have been talking to herself or even to me in some spiritual sense, but to someone else. Her back was turned to me where I could not see her face and she may have been listening with the ear that was lying on the bed. "See you soon," I remembered her say.

I heard faint voices down stairs. "It seems like it's been forever," I heard my wife say. I heard a familiar voice; a man's voice. I heard them conversing while they walked up the stairs. "I wasn't sure when a good time would be to see after the funeral," he said to my wife. I knew that voice.

"I couldn't wait see you for too much longer," she replied, "I just needed to be with you." I saw their shadows get closer to the bedroom doorway. I saw her shadow holding his ethereal like hand, guiding him to our bedroom. I closed my eyes, hoping that it was not a man I didn't know. I heard them enter the room and I opened my eyes to see my best friend

and co-worker talking to my wife. At least she had a friend to talk too. *Wait, why is she taking off his pants? He is bending her over? WHAT THE FUCK!?*

I unwillingly watched as my best friend fucked my wife from behind. He took the straps of her gown and pulled them down so her breasts were revealed so he could grab them while he plowed into her. She bit down on her bottom lip to keep from making a lot of noise. I heard him talk dirty to her and she moaned when he did; she loved every second of it and it killed me that I never knew what she liked in bed. Why did she feel that I couldn't be what she wanted? Where did I go wrong? "Red on top, fire in the hole," I heard my "friend" say.

Wait! Why the fuck am I feeling sorry for myself? She is the goddamn one fucking my best friend! I felt the rage building up and the objects around me start to shake. They heard the rumbling as the whole house started to tremor. They got out of their sex position and looked around the room. My wife backed herself into a corner and my "friend" started to into the hallway to escape. I looked at the door and closed it with my mind.

What a coward! You left a woman in danger to save your own ass? You bastard! You will get what you deserve.

The mirror that stood atop of the dresser started to crack as the house started to implode on itself. My rage made me strong, strong enough to get the point across. Shards of glass fell onto the top of the dresser and on the floor. As I watched my wife's lover pull at the door to escape, I raised four large pieces of glass and proceeded to throw them at him, one at a time.

The first one missed his head but pierced through the dry wall to his left. *That got his attention.* I was numb at this point. I heard my wife screaming in the background but didn't care at this point; I just wanted him dead. I threw another jagged piece of glass at him and watched it as it went through his jugular and the blood poured over my nice hard wood floors. He went to his knees holding his throat to keep the blood from coming out; as if it were like a nose bleeds. *You silly fucktard, you are not going to survive this!* The blue room I watched tonight started to turn red and I couldn't help but wonder what cruel god wanted me to see this infidelity.

My wife's lover fell forwards and landed on his face and broke his own nose just before he died. It was ironic; if I were still mortal I would have broken it anyways. I watched drywall dust fall from the ceiling and my wife quivering in fear of what to do. The house was about to collapse, and every time I thought of her being the slut of the neighborhood, the wood and plaster that helped keep this home I made for us started to break more.

I finally was able to control myself and I hovered to her and bent over and put my face in front of hers. I was not able to tell if she knew it was me or if she could even see me, but she looked towards me as if she knew I were here. "You are a bitch," I said, "I gave you everything and this is how you mourn me?" I saw a tear fall down her cheek as it wiped away the dirt and dust from her face as it fell. "All I wanted was a family," she replied, "but you ignored me, pushed me away."

My rage grew more, but not because she made me angry, but because she was right. Maybe I did push her away. No. *That's not an excuse!* I tried to calm down, I tried to leave this forsaken room, but I can't. Something is keeping me here! *Goddamn you!* My wife placed herself in a fetal position with a blanket wrapped around her. *Good. I hope they find you naked to see how you were slutting it up before you died.* "You are a money hungry, high society, narcissistic, twat; and I hope you enjoy all the things I got for you as it all comes crashing down on you, killing you in the process," I yelled out loud.

There was no way she didn't hear that. I watched as the roof collapsed on her and the debris poured over her pretty red hair. The floor gave way beneath her as she fell hitting all the fine china in the dining room below. The wine she collected over the years fell from their racks and shattered next to her; more red encompassed her body. She was dead at this point and there was no going back.

I killed my wife and her lover and that bothered me; but what bothered me more was that I could not move or talk to her when things were peaceful, but the only emotion I could convey to her was hate when everything came into fruition. That bothers me the most.

True Reflections

I really wish my damn kids would hurry the hell up! Tabitha often had this thought in the morning times during the week, but of course, she would never display it; she had a reputation to uphold. It was the same thing all day long, and it never seemed to end; she just wanted one of her kids to graduate high school and get the hell out of the house, but she would never tell anyone that. However, this was not a school morning; it was the evening of the first night of the local state fair.

Tabitha stood by the front door with the upmost patience that a person could have. *Don't get angry! We don't want to scar the children's emotions.* The boys were running down the hallway upstairs. It was a never-ending trial to see who could get to the front door. The floorboards sounded like they were breaking every time they took a step. That slight imperfection annoyed Tabitha. *That's great; everyone will think that my home is coming apart from the top to the bottom.* No one thought that, in fact, everyone clamored on and on about the home she and her husband own. It was a token of many peoples jealousy and Tabitha wanted to keep it that way.

Home was located in the rich suburbs of Denver, near the downtown area but far enough away from the preverbal ghetto that made Tabitha relax when the thought of vandalism was the furthest thing from her mind. Taking cliché's out of the equation, it was also the prime spot to live in; award winning schools, a great club that costs an absurd amount of money to be a part of, in which no one ever went to. No one ever went in the house because Tabitha's husband and kids were well aware of the snob that frequented it. So when Muffy from Clermont St. comes in to chat with Buffy from Greenbriar Cliff Township, they got to the gossiping about the other trophy wives and how they are aging quicker or if their kid may or may not be gay, it was the third level of Hell that no one in the house cared to be around. The only reason for the membership was to shut good old mom the fuck up, and it did.

James was a buying agent for a worldwide chain of shopping stores. This was the job of how Tabitha could afford such expenditures. You know the kind of stores. The ones when you walk in, there is a greeter waiting for you, but can hardly stand because they are so old but at the same time Social Security doesn't pay them enough, so they have to take on this

crap job. The endless lanes or checkout registers but for some reason only three are open at a time. The place you deeply hate to go to, but do so because it is so cheap because of employees like James.

His job was to get the lowest cost on major products that people buy on a regular basis. The reason why he is so good at his job is because if he makes the decision not to carry a product in the thousands of locations then that said company will more than likely go belly-up. In return, the company takes a slight loss than they normally would, because not being at James's stores would mean impending doom. This is James job and part of the reason why some businesses go under, like the ones that make your favorite tasty cake for in the evenings after dinner or while doing homework. "Not my tasty snack time goodness!" You may say to yourself, and yes, it can happen and you have corporations like what James works for to blame.

"Those rides aren't going to ride themselves," Tabitha yelled to the kids. The twin boys were already coming down.

The twins, Luke and Joey were their names; the cutest faces that a person could look at, but the attitude of Satan's own spawns. The consistent pranks on themselves, to the kids and teachers at school, the outbursts, and temper tantrums that come from nowhere, were enough for Satan to give them up for adoption. One was a lot better than the other was. Luke was a great kid but Joey was the one that makes him go into outbursts along with him. Tabitha will never tell anyone this or even acknowledge it, but the teachers at Luke's school think that he has some sort of autism that they think he should be tested. *Not my boy! He is perfect and I will never think otherwise.*

Tabitha watched as her once beautiful daughter came down the stairs with her boyfriend, Chad, to go to the fair. *Chad.* Chad is what would come out of a sexual escapade between two drunken people that had "beer goggles" on. He was not attractive and to make it worse he was all pierced and tattooed up and unfortunately that made him cool in her daughter's, Shelly's, eyes. Shelly, before she took the initiative to look more like her boyfriend by dying her hair and piercing her nose through one nostril, once looked like her mom; blonde hair, porcelain skin and clothes that complimented her figure more than the black drapes that hung from her body now.

Chad. Chad was the bane of mine...and my daughter's existence. If I had a scab in my nose right now, I would name it Chad. Chad is a scab I can't do anything about because if I keep picking my nose to get rid of it, it would just come back again and may annoy me even more.

“Looking good today ma’am,” Chad said to Tabitha on the way out the door. Tabitha looked the other way, gritted her teeth together, and said, “Thanks.” The boys were already outside, goofing off in yard. It had been raining recently and in the springtime, it is more than likely going to be more mud than just water.

“Get in the car and make sure you wipe off your feet!” Tabitha shouted. *I didn’t get it so you can get your feet all over the leather and fuck it up.* She turned around to lock the door that went into the keyhole perfectly. “God forbid the key makes a lot of noise in a hole,” her husband would tell her, making fun of her obsessive trait. She missed her husband’s company, but never cared much for him as a person. They had the relationship of him being the typical football star and she was the beauty queen. They hooked up and that is, how they say, is that. She counted on James getting the college scholarship to wherever and following him to the NFL, making millions a year to live the life she wanted.

James tore a muscle in his right leg and wasn’t able to play ball like he used to. Tabitha did the right thing, staying with a man that loved her and a man with a huge fortune to gain once his hillbilly parents die. Tabitha didn’t like many people and most people didn’t like her; she had her nose so far in the air that one would think they had a load in their pants. James didn’t like her anymore either.

Tabitha was well aware that James went out of town to nail some secretary or business associate; maybe a little bit of work was done as well. This bothered Tabitha, even though she would say that it didn’t. *What is so wrong with me? Am I not pretty enough?* The problem was that she was; more than enough for any person. What she didn’t realize is that she thought her looks and sex would make her and anyone else happy.

The whole way to the fair, Tabitha thought how much she was going to hate this trip and how much her face was going to hurt from all the forced smiling she was going to have to do. Carnivals and fairs were the most backwoods, hillbilly things that anyone can do. Paying money to be able to ride on old Tilt-A-Whirls that haven’t been maintained in years, giving carnies money so you can throw balls at bottles that are bottom heavy anyways, rigged games, you name it, and she probably had a conspiracy behind it. *Probably spend the money on drugs and gang bang the one legged lady at the freak show. How else is she going to get any?*

As they arrived, it was pretty much what she knew it would be; drunken rednecks with their kids, teenagers grabbing at one another. The kids wanted to come and being the good mom that she thought she was, Tabitha went along with it.

When they exited the Escalade, the boys went first. Tabitha looked to her right and saw her daughter waiting with her hand out.

“Just give me the money and I’ll keep an eye out on the brats,” Shelly said in disdain while chomping away at her gum. *Wait, she didn’t have gum earlier. Chad did but...yuck, that’s fuckin’ gross. His slimy, lizard like tongue down her throat and I didn’t even see it. I’m glad that I didn’t.*

“I’ll go in with you,” Tabitha told her. Tabitha threw her hips out and placed her other hand on her hip.

“I know you don’t want to be here, so just give the money and you can go back to your uppity thoughts,” Shelly replied. She wasn’t wrong and that is what made Tabitha hate her daughter more and more. The fact that someone can peer through her bullshit made her own daughter more of a threat than anyone else; the sad reality is that Tabitha never really thought of that being the reason she didn’t like her that much, she just assumed it was the attitude and the boy she was dating that made her feel that way.

“I want you guys back here in an hour and a half,” Tabitha yelled. She stood by her car for about thirty minutes until the smell of the Port-a-potty’s started wafting her way. She caught a good whiff of what Denver’s finest left behind and decided to linger inside the carnival.

She walked around the attractions and started to get a little reminiscent of her youth and how she came to these things just to laugh at the people who loved it so much in a hipster like way. Deep down she loved it, but the way she was brought up by a mother that wanted perfection from her. *Nothing was ever good enough, I was never skinny enough, or pretty enough.* Walking around the park, she came to the part of the carnival that no one ever goes to anymore; the magic mirror and freak show attraction. The hall of mirrors was what it always was; a fun way to look at your friends disfigurements as a reflection and the freak show was nothing more than a statue of someone that “existed” at one time or another. It was a joke and nothing ever changes.

Tabitha, through her tour of the fairgrounds, could not find her kids. She started to get afraid; not because she couldn’t find her children and the freak that may be nailing her daughter, but she couldn’t find where the entrance was.

“You seem lost,” a man said from behind her. Tabitha jumped and yelped in fright. She turned around to find an older man with a black and grey striped top hat, smiling at her. *His smile is so large, his teeth...there is no way a person can have that many teeth.*

“What,” she asked.

“Are you lost?” He creepily hissed, “Are you looking for a way out?” *Yes, in more ways than one.* The man backed away some and revealed himself to be a tall man with slender legs and a small belly that awkwardly protruded out from the rest of him. He had a red cummerbund around it and a jacket with the same colored stripes as his hat; black and grey. The white button up shirt he wore underneath was covered in yellow and brown stains. *Funny, all this filth parading in front of me and the cleanest thing about him is his teeth.*

“So,” he said in a deep voice, “you are looking for a way out?” Tabitha stared as he walked towards the ‘Hall of Mirrors’ attraction. In reality, it was a big blue trailer that someone wanted to get rid of back in the day and was used for this lost attraction.

“Yes, I just need a way out,” Tabitha said walking behind him.

The man grinned and said, “Most people here are.” *What did he mean by that? Why the smirk?*

“Well,” he continued, “there are a few ways out of this...place.”

“That’s fine, it doesn’t matter which one,” Tabitha exclaimed.

“Then it shouldn’t matter which way you go,” the man with the top hat said.

This conversation seemed familiar, like something my grandfather used to read or tell me. The conversation was going in circles by the man’s own devices. Tabitha wanted to hurry this up.

“The easy way then, I want to know the easiest out there is,” she yelled to him, as he got further away from her. She paced up to the attraction to get an answer from him.

“Did you hear me?”

“I did, but sometimes the easiest things are not worth doing,” he said gesturing to the entrance next to them. *What the fuck are you talking about?*

“Please walk in,” the man asked her, “the closest way is an exit in the back of the attraction and who knows, perhaps you’ll see something you like.”

“I don’t think I will, but thanks,” she said sarcastically, “It’s down this way I assume?”

“Don’t worry you won’t miss it,” the man said with a grin as she walked into the attraction, “You won’t miss a thing.”

Tabitha started walking down the dark hallway with scattered track lighting above. A strobe light was also going to give the place a creep factor. The landing she was standing on was metal, but gated enough to where you can see below. She peered down expecting to see dirt or a storage area at the bottom of the trailer; but there was nothing, literally. *I can’t see the bottom. How high up did this trailer stand?*

The mirrors did their job, making the normal look oblong, fat, skinny, long necks, big hips and so on. It was the typical carnival mirror tricks that Tabitha expected. She never liked the mirrors, *how could anyone like or laugh at looking hideous?* The very thought of looking bad for solitary moment made her ass cheeks pucker up. The metal walkway moved every time she took a step, which caused her to walk slowly to the exit in the middle of the trailer. It was taking forever and Tabitha started to wonder if this was the easier way.

Walking past the magic mirrors, she saw herself transform into a hobbit like person, a giraffe lady, and a person with huge thighs. Every time she saw her goofy reflections it scared her, and the sooner she got out, the better. Walking as fast as she could, scared that the floor would give in, Tabitha stopped in her tracks to look at one mirror.

This mirror was not like the others. It didn't alter your reflection in any negative way, it made you better. It was almost like perfection. Tabitha saw herself the way she did in high school; young and vibrant. Whatever this mirror was, it peeled away the shell of a woman Tabitha thought she was. She walked closer to the mirror to get a better view of her skin, how her eyes no longer had crow's feet, or the second chin she was getting. Her reflection was a representation of how she wanted to be.

Laughing to herself, she turned her head to the right and left, to see if anyone else was inside the attraction. She kept giggling at herself and the reflection. In her mind, she or the mirror magically turned back the hands of time by about twenty years. She wanted to start dancing, but she held back as much as possible.

When she had her back turned to the mirror, her reflection grew older. Her clothes were falling off her and her breasts started sagging. Her blonde hair went grey and age spots grew. Tabitha turned around to admire herself again and saw this frail woman looking back at her.

"No!" she screamed at the mirror. The reflection's eyes turned black and put its arms out of its own supposed confined space, and grabbed Tabitha and screamed back at her. Taking her by the hair, the older version of Tabitha pulled her into the mirror while its teeth fell out of its face.

"Get in the car!" Tabitha yelled. Her kids were late and she was pissed off enough as it was after that experience in the mirror attraction; it took her forever to get out.

"Mom," Shelly said, "chillax, it was like ten minutes after the time you gave!"

The boys got in the back of the Escalade and put on their seatbelts instantly. They never saw their mommy this angry. Luke started crying and yelling out of fear. Shelly got in the car and turned to comfort Luke.

“Look, ma’am,” Chad started to say. Tabitha’s eyes grew big and the rage started making her face red.

“Shut up! Shut up! You fucking freak! You Goth piece of shit! You are nothing to me. You are an after school movie ready to happen! You are a date rape ad at best! Shut up! Shut your fucking face!”

The sound of what can best be described as, a female version of Satan, and the curse words shut the entire car up; even the radio seemed to get quiet.

“All I ask is for is a little respect; for you and me but you can’t even do that!” Tabitha continued, “You have everything and you act like you have nothing! I would have killed to get the opportunities you all have! I have never asked much out of anyone, just a little goddamn respect! You all are the little bullets that I put in my imaginary gun that I want to blow my brains out with!”

“Ladies Night” by Kool & the Gang, was playing in the Escalade, like Tabitha was stuck in the past. The boys sniffled at their mom yelling at them. The rest of the ride home was quiet as each of the kids was trying to console one another. Little whispers of, “it’s okay” came out every once in a while, mostly by Shelly.

The SUV reached the driveway of their home. The kids jumped out of the car and left their mom to her own devices. She leaned back in the leather seat and enjoyed the silence around her, until a ringing came from the glove box. She reached over and opened it to find a cell phone that she had never seen before. There was no name on it and it had a purple case. She scrolled through the contact list that had people on it that she didn’t know, except for one. She called the number and listened as her husband answered, “Hey baby, missing you. You going to come after work, so we both can.”

Tabitha hit the, “end call” button and moaned in pain. Salty tears filled her eyes, and gushed down her cheeks into her mouth. The salty taste lingered on her lips and tongue as she screamed into the air. She repeatedly punched the passenger seat and knocked the back seat down. Her rage consumed her. *Everything is not okay, and that’s not alright!* What Tabitha’s mentality was not allowing her to see was that nothing was ever going to be perfect. Her mother always told her that you should live in a perfect life and a perfect home with kids that represent you as a parent. She and society told her that she would be ravished with nice

things, driving Mercedes, sipping wine all the time; but she didn't and that was pissing her off. *Did I drive him away? Did I become ugly?*

It was none of those things. The fact of the matter was that she was not a loving person anymore and quite frankly a nasty human being in James's eyes. He wasn't stupid; she was never in it for the love, just the wealth. *I'm just the trophy wife?*

She walked out of the car, void of emotion. She reached the front of the door, which was hanging wide open. She walked across the threshold hoping that sitting down would make her feel better. She would never know that feeling of relaxation as she looked at the stairs to her right and gazed at the muddy footprints going up the stairs that belonged to Joey because the good child, Luke; his shoes were where they needed to be.

Tabitha walked slowly up the stairs and to the left. She reached the bathroom and went over to the tub to start a bath for the twins. As she waited for the tub to fill up she looked in the trash next to the toilet and saw an EPT test. As she had not used one of these in a few years, it was clear to her that Shelly was the one that urinated on the stick. It wasn't the fact she was having sex, it was the fact she was screwing Chad and even worse, it was positive. *What will everyone think?*

Tabitha rose from her position of kneeling next to the tub and walked calmly to Shelly's room. When she opened the door, she saw her and Chad sitting on the bed listening to whatever metal band was popular.

"Can't you knock," Shelly yelled. Tabitha paid no attention, nor did she care about her daughters tone. With the pregnancy test in her hand, upward for the world to see, Tabitha asked, "Is this yours?" A deer in headlights look came upon both Shelly and Chad.

"Mom..." Shelly started to plead.

"Stay right there," Tabitha interrupted, "We're going to have a...chat." The monotone voice concerned Shelly, as she never heard her mother that calm. As Tabitha made her way back downstairs, she saw the boys running to the tub naked. Shelly warned Chad that he probably should leave but he was having no part in leaving her during this situation.

Tabitha came back up the stairs with her hands behind her back. Chad thought he would talk some sense into her. "Look," he started, "I just want you to know that I will be the best man and dad." Tabitha nodded her head mockingly while Chad was talking.

"I'm sure you would be a good dad," Tabitha mocked. She brought her right hand down to her side. Tabitha was grasping a cleaver. "A man," she said while bringing the cleaver behind her, "that may be a little hard." She swung the cleaver into Chad's crotch. Blood spewed from the wound. "HOW BIG OF MAN ARE YOU NOW!" Tabitha shouted.

Chad grasped himself and looking as his testicles poured out of him. Tabitha then stuck the clever in his head to finish him off.

Joey and Luke listened as their sister screamed and the sound of bone being crushed came from down the hall. Soon their sister wasn't screaming anymore and they sat in the tub waiting for mommy to come and help, not realizing that mommy was the monster they feared.

Tabitha walked down the hall and the boys knew someone was coming. Their eyes got big when they realized it was their mom, but got scared when they saw the blood on her hands. "It's okay, mommy, will make it better," she said. The boys started crying.

"Don't cry! You don't have to worry about being bad anymore. Mommy will make it quick!"

Tabitha picked up a hairdryer, plugged it into the wall outlet, and turned it on high. The boys had no understanding of water, and what happens when electricity hits it. "I'M A GOOD PERSON!" Tabitha yelled as she dropped the hair dryer into the tub.

Tabitha fell backwards from the abyss of nothing and broke through the other side of the mirror. Shards of the glass that made her look beautiful; now were making her ugly. She fell onto the metal floor of the House of Mirrors. She screamed as she pulled glass from her body. The man with the black and grey hat came walking down the way, prancing, swinging a cane around, and dancing to the sound of his own music.

"It seems that your mind doesn't agree with you," he laughed. Crying, Tabitha yelled, "What did you do!"

"I did nothing," he exclaimed, "The mirror reflects the person you really are."

"It made me ugly now," Tabitha, cried.

"No, it didn't make you ugly, you were already ugly inside, and now you are the same on the outside." Tabitha lied on the rusty floor and begged to be dead. The man in the top hat was confused.

"Did you like what you saw?" he asked.

THE END

Little Girl

“You think your little world won’t change,” the dark man in the sewer drain told Olivia, “It will in a way that will make you fear for the things that you would normally cherish, make you hide in fear.”

Olivia Gentry was the youngest of her siblings and the sweeter of them. She was surrounded by boys that did nothing but torment her when her parents weren’t looking. Chad and Brad were two years apart in age but not in mental maturity. Olivia never could tell which was acting like the other so it made her question which one should be the more mature one of the two. She was pretty sure Chad was the one acting like the immature one most of the time even though he was the oldest.

Tch...boys. Every time she trolled her eyes at the idiotic shenanigans, a little ditty would pop in her head that her friend Alexis from school would sing:

Girls go to college to get more knowledge; boys go to Jupiter to get more stupider.

It was her father’s annual picnic for his company. Every year they vote to go to the Concord Point Lighthouse grounds to grill and drink. It was April, but it was warm around the Chesapeake Bay area in Maryland, which is typically unheard of. Olivia never really knew what her father did for a living and nor did she really care. All she knew was that her family lived in a nice house and had nice things since she could remember.

Chad and Brad were throwing the baseball to each other, trying to catch their fly balls with the oversized baseball gloves that their dad gave them this past Christmas. Purposely trying to throw the ball over one another so the other would have to run out of the way to grab it, Olivia remained seated at one on the picnic benches; watching her parents ignore her and get sloppy drunk. Olivia was not dumb, she knew what they were doing and what their, “big people,” drinks did to them if they had too many.

The grownups were laughing hysterically at jokes that were not that funny, at least to Olivia and falling over in their belligerence; Olivia casted her eyes to her two brothers having fun by themselves. *Why are we the only kids here?* The reason for this was that her father was the head of his company that specialized in cardboard printing. The whole event was meant to be adults only and since he was the head honcho, he was excluded from the rule and no one ever questioned it.

The clouds grew dark and the wind blew the water in the ocean to crash harder against the rocks below the lighthouse. The women were drinking, with their noses in the air,

ignoring the other women because they loathed one another. The drunken men kept them busy with their flirting towards one another. Single and married alike, there was no limit to the possible sex that would happen later between associates. It was one big swinger's party, with the ocean in the background to romanticize it.

Olivia hopped from the bench and walked towards her brothers. She did not see the reason to make each other work since that defeated the point of baseball or any sport for that matter. She did not know a lot about sports, but she knew teamwork was the majority of it. As she paced towards the boys, the clouds created a shadow that followed her until the park area was engulfed in darkness.

"I want to play," she told her brothers. Chad and Brad looked at one another and gave each other an insidious grin.

"Okay," Chad said, smiling at his little sister.

"You stay in the middle of the both of us and try to get the ball," Brad continued.

Innocently not knowing what either one was up to, Olivia agreed to the terms of being able to play with her big brothers for the first time. It was something she had always wanted in life so far and being able to say she hung out with them for a while was a checkmark off her mental list of things to do.

They all went to their positions waiting for the game to start. The blades of grass rippled from the heavy winds that had started to come in from the north. Olivia's brothers started to throw the ball to one another and Olivia hopped and ran from side to side as they passed it to each other. Both laughing at the expense of Olivia, they knew that she was unaware of the 'Monkey in the Middle' game they were tricking her with.

"Come on!"

"What's wrong, too short and too slow to get it?"

They both cackled in their callousness towards Olivia as she sprinted as fast as her little legs could take her.

"Let me have the ball!" she bellowed as loud as a little girl could.

The grownups had started to take notice of the impending storm and the water coming over the edge of the cliffs. They started to pack up their belongings as the siblings father yelled, "Get your things! We need to go! It's about to rain!"

The boys heard their father, but Olivia was too preoccupied trying to take the baseball from her evil genius brothers that she paid no attention to others of the high winds that she was running against.

The boys watched their father gather up sports equipment and food as umbrellas started to launch off the ground into the ocean. The storm was going to be bad; everyone knew it, except for Olivia. The boys looked at their sister and decided that they were going to get into the car first and be daddy's little helpers.

Brad looked at his sister and yelled, "You want the ball? Go and get it!"

He threw the ball over her head and into the parking lot about thirty feet away. They cackled in their cleverness and ran off after Olivia started to fetch it like a dog with a bone.

"I got it!" She said to herself as she ran to the parking lot. The wind blew her backwards and she looked behind her to see all the grownups fumbling for their things. She realized that she needed to hurry so she can get her belongings, which was just her dolly that she had to keep her company. No one else was going too.

The baseball was resting on a square sewer drain that was a little below the parking lot so that the water could flow to it. The grate was rusted and the bars had broken off the frame in some places. To an adult's eye, it was unsafe and had not been maintained in some time. Things like that are never noticed by a child and as she stepped onto the grate and leaned over to pick up the ball, the grate broke and Olivia fell into it with no one to witness the event.

The rusted metal scraped her arms and legs on the way down to the bottom of the sewer. She fell on her side and cried for her mommy and daddy. The rain had started to come down and the water cascaded on her body. The fall was not long. She hit the bottom immediately and could see the parking lot from inside. Watching the cars outside and no one entering them, she sat up and placed her knees in front of her face, rocking herself back and forth to calm herself down.

What if no one finds me?

Olivia turned her head to the right and saw a pair of eyes watching her. She was unsure of what to make of it. At first, she wondered if it was light hitting the damp walls making the illusion of a set of eyes. *But there is no light, it is nothing but dark.*

"Little girl," a voice emerged from the darkness. Olivia hid her face and closed her eyes. It was just her imagination, like when one of her stuffed animals makes a big shadow in her room. *Yeah, that's all it is.*

A man in the corner of the sewer started to crawl towards her.

"Little girl, I am not going to hurt you," he whispered. The eerie whisper did not help Olivia feel better.

"Leave me alone!" she yelled.

The crashing of the ocean waves made it impossible for anyone outside to hear her. The man shifted his way back into his corner. His fingers were long and his nose short. She thought he was a human pig the way his nose looked. He watched Olivia and every once in a while she would peak and look at his crystal blue eyes.

“HELP!” she cried out, “Somebody get me out of here!” Olivia yelled at the top of her lungs and yet no one had come to the parking lot yet.

“No one will hear you right now,” the man said. Olivia uncurled from her fetal position and with all her courage, stood up to see the outside.

The gangly man shifted his body to the other side of the wall to see what Olivia was seeing. He folded his hands together, grinning in delight at the upcoming storm that was to ensue.

“SOMEBODY! PLEASE!”

The man laughed to himself. Olivia shifted his eyes to him and then back to the opening above them. She wasn't scared of the man, but rather at the notion of not being found right away.

Cackling to himself, “No one is going to find you little girl, at least not right away.”

“What do you know about it,” she yelled. He covered his face and hid it from her. He was frightened by her yelling. “Please don't scream at me little girl, I have done nothing to you!”

“Stay away from me,” she sternly said.

Uncovering his face, he hesitantly looked at her and said, “I am not your enemy, the world out there is your problem...not me.”

Waiting for people to come, Olivia decided that the man in the sewer with her was going to be her emotional punching bag.

“Is not!” she immaturely yelled.

The man folded his hands and looked above the sewer grate waiting for the disappointment that will emerge.

“You know nothing but your dolly and cartoon's, you watch at home while the real world still goes on,” he passively said with a raised, tattered eyebrow.

Olivia ignored the man and started to hop up and down, landing on the hard soles of her expensive flats. The rain started to come down and hard it was, Olivia never heard the sound of heavy rain or the crashing of hail. She stopped hopping and bent down to protect her face from the hail that fell upon them.

“Hide in the other corner little girl,” the man gasped.

She did not think of him as an evil creature or a mean man at that time, all she wanted was someone to protect her from the weather she had never encountered; the hail. She cowered to the corner and hid her face until the hail stopped and there was nothing else but rain. *Why has no one gotten to the cars yet?*

The men and women that partook in the events and festivities at her father's expense were hiding from the hail under the shade and inside the bathroom building. They mingled and laughed in spite of the fact that a little girl had gone missing.

"They are still around; they are just hiding from the weather," the gangly man said, "Why are you scared of the weather?"

She opened her eyes at him, cold and frightened she replied, "I have never been out in it."

The tides crashed hard at the end of her sentence but the gangly man grinned, showing his rotted teeth and bleeding gums. "You are a child, why have you not been out in the rain at least once in your life?"

"They never really take me out." Olivia replied.

"What do you do for fun?"

"I stay at home for school, and I play inside and my mommy comes home and brings me clothes and stuff."

The gangly man felt sorry for her. She had been shut in for a lot of her life and not by her own devices.

"Don't you have friends that play with you?"

"Every once in a while mommy has friends that come over with their kids, but most of the time they are older than me," she exclaimed over the sound of the crashing tides. The hail had stopped and Olivia uncovered the rest of her face. She then came to a realization.

"Why do you care so much anyways? I am not even supposed to be talking to you!" she snobbishly said.

"Beg your pardon miss, but I don't think you even know how to really talk to a person anyways," the man replied.

As much as she ignored his comment, deep down she knew he was right in some way.

"If you don't mind me saying so miss, it seems like they just want to keep you shut up and shut in."

"Nuh-uh," she whimpered, "You know nothing about it!"

"I know that no one has come looking for you yet," he slyly grinned.

"They would have been hit by the hard rock thingy's coming from the sky!"

“In my observations child, nothing should keep a parent away from finding their child.”

The man crawled out into the rain and let his head get wet as he removed his hood. The coat he wore looked as if it was too small for him, almost like he had been down there for a long time. Olivia watched him and he did not seem like he would be that old, but his skin was pale and his hair was long and missing chunks. Something changed this man, but Olivia did not have the mental capacity to know or figure out why.

The hail had let up and the people ran to their cars in a hurry as if the rain would make them melt. Well. Perhaps the women, as the rain would make their caked on makeup run from their face to the concrete.

“Here they come little girl, I hope they remember you.”

The men and women ran to their cars and quickly fidgeted with their handles before they realized it was locked. Olivia’s father was one of the first to emerge into sight.

“Daddy! Help me!” Olivia yelled as the crash of the ocean waves and the hard rain made it impossible to hear. She watched as a woman she had never met come up behind him and grabbed him.

I have never seen her before. Why is she grabbing my Daddy? Should I know her? Why is she pulling his shirt? What is she looking around for? No. Stop!

“STOP KISSING MY DADDY!”

She watched as her father kissed another woman goodbye as her mother remained ignorant to it, buckling the two boys in the seat. They were old enough to get themselves in the car. They did not need the help.

“I’m sorry little girl,” the man said.

Olivia wiped her eyes of rain and tears. She looked at the man she once found hideous and wanted nothing more for someone tell her that everything would be all right. The gangly man was not one of those people. As bad as he felt for the girl, the more he felt the power over her.

“It is truly unfortunate that you had to see that,” he continued. He crawled back into his corner and let out a sigh of relief. The bones in his back popped as he tried to straighten himself out. Olivia noticed his back was hunched over and was instantly overcome by the feeling of doing the back test that the doctors do sometimes to find scoliosis. The gangly man’s condition was way past that.

“Why do live here?”

The man turned to look at her and watched her wipe the rest of her remaining tears. “I don’t just live here. I live in the pipes that are attached to here,” he answered.

“I know but why?”

“In the end no one cares. Not your parents, not friends, not humanity. It’s all a big lie.”

“Not everything is a lie,” Olivia shook her head in disbelief.

“I played here when I was young and I crawled in this gate because I was curious and a bit of a trouble maker. My parents and my brother and sister got inside the car, drove off, and left me here. They never came back for me. I am sure they realized it at some point but not to the point where anyone bothered to look for me here.”

Confused, Olivia thought about it.

“Why not just get out?” she asked.

“Why don’t you just get out?” he retorted.

Olivia realized the dumbness of her question and then thought about it more as she watched her dad go to the car.

“HELP! HELP ME PLEASE!” she shouted, but no one could hear her. At this point, everyone was pulling out of the parking spaces, flashing their headlights to let others know they could proceed. One didn’t and it created a bumper-to-bumper collision with several other cars. Olivia covered her ears from the crashing of rubber and metal. The adult men got out of the car and started to gripe to one another.

“Wait,” Olivia said, “It’s not raining all the time. Someone would have to hear you eventually.”

Smiling at her, the gangly man said, “At home education seems to be doing well for you little girl.”

Olivia stood confused at why he thought no one else would think of that.

“It wouldn’t matter. Everyone lets you down in the end. The only world I knew or ever wanted to know came to an end. I just stayed around and ate off peoples left overs. This is my home now. He has given me a home.”

“Who,” Olivia asked.

“It doesn’t matter.”

The men’s bickering to one another became loud.

“What the fuck is wrong with you? Use your goddamn lights when it’s raining you dumb shit,” the first man shouted that emerged from the blue SUV. Olivia had heard this

language but not so many bad words in one sentence. The two men were friends to Olivia's daddy but they never seemed to see eye to eye.

"Sorry, but stop backing out of the spot, like you own the damn parking lot you near sighted fucktard!" the other man in the white car said.

The gangly man watched with excitement as they started to trade blows. The men were drenched and drunk. The accident wasn't just about headlights being on, it was the fact they were both drunk.

"You see little girl," he said to Olivia, "there is no reason, or niceness left in this world. Humans were made to make each other suffer in some way. Your parents lock you in your house to keep you away from joy, and control you. Your brothers torment you to tears, and your father cheats on your mother as she either ignores this fact or is too naïve to face it. You are no better off with them than you are with me."

"Shut up," she said.

"Stay with me, stay with us!"

As angry, as she was with the situation and as much as she realized he might be right. She did not want to end up like him; a disfigured person. She looked him up and down in disgust and pity. The gangly man noticed this and went on the defensive.

"I disgust you. I tell you the truth, but you would rather stay with beautiful people and be lied to," he hissed as his top teeth turned into fangs.

She screamed in terror and it echoed through the sewers and outside. The rain had started to let up. The cars stopped and the two men fighting put away their fists and looked at each other wondering why they were arguing. They argued over a piece of overpriced metal; that is how the gangly man saw it.

Olivia's father was one of the men outside trying to stop the fight from escalating any more than it was. The scream was heard in spite of the crashing waves around them.

He looked into his car and saw his wife and two boys staring at the spectacle that was in front of them. His daughter was missing.

"Where's Olivia?" he yelled. Olivia's mother looked back as if he was lying about her not being there and put her hands up signifying that she did not know.

"Olivia!"

She yelled and screamed, "I'm here! Get me out!"

The gangly man crept back into the pipes and the shadows. Olivia watched as the monster disappeared in the drainage. Olivia's father looked down the sewer drain gate and saw his daughter with her hands out, waiting to be pulled out. The other men came and

helped her out of the drain. It took a couple of men to get a grasp on her soaked skin but they managed to all the same.

Olivia's father placed her on her feet and started to yell at her, asking her where she was and why she was down there. She did not cry nor did she fidget. Her anger took over her sadness and fright from what she had been through. Any innocence she had was no gone thanks to the words of a creature with more insight than most.

"Answer me," her father yelled, "What happened?"

Olivia took her little fist and punched her father in the face. It was hard. She had the strength of a man and it took him by surprise.

"What happened daddy?" She condescendingly asked, "What happened was that you left me out in bad weather so you could kiss that twat, that's not mommy!"

The people around her started to gasp as the secret was revealed.

"You are a piece of shit and I hope you die," she told her own father.

She walked away from her stunned father and paced towards the car where the rest of her family sat in watch.

"Olivia," her mother yelled, "you apologize to your father right now!"

"Fuck you, you drunk ignorant bitch," Olivia retorted.

The reason she fell into the sewer was to fetch a baseball that belonged to her brothers in attempt to get closer to them. Instead they teased her with a game of 'monkey in the middle'. She brought the baseball with her and showed it off to her brothers that smiled and laughed while they told her they were sorry.

Olivia grasped the ball in her hand and took Brad, whom was closest to her and started beating him in the face with his own baseball.

"MONKEY IN THE MIDDLE! IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR STUPID FACE!" she screamed as the blood flew from his nose onto Chad that started to cower to the other door, watching as his little sister beat the shit out of his brother.

Olivia lost something that day. Most would say respect but respect is a two way street. Respect is earned, not something that is acquired. It was more than that though. She lost respect for the world as the truth came crashing down around her, and she realized that nothing mattered. The worse thing that Olivia lost was her endearing innocence.

The gangly man traveled through the sewers and returned to the man that saved him from starvation.

"I could not get her to agree to join us," he told a man with a black hoodie. He was his mentor, his leader.

“I am sorry Allen,” he continued.

Allen turned to him with a nostalgic look in his eye.

“It’s fine. All little girls deserve to be with their families. I wish my niece had that chance before she burned to death.”

The gangly vampire felt bad for his master, but in the end, Allen told him, “It won’t matter soon anyways. The world will be like us and we will have to fight to keep as many people alive as human’s we can so little girls like her can have a home to go to.”