

Enter Night

The run down house appeared depressed. Compared to the rest of the houses on the block it looked out of place. The windows looked like eyes filled with dark memories. The door was boarded up with rotting planks of wood and rusting nails. The walls seemed to be whining with the weight of the roof. Below it was the porch, which was missing most of the floorboards. The railing had fallen off, too rotten to hold itself up. The yard was... well not much. The soil was hard and dry. Cracks snaked across the ground. Dead and overgrown shrubs blocked the way to the unwelcoming door. Three trees stood near the porch, branches sagging low with only two or three brown shriveled leaves.

The neighbors would often complain about the shrubs and ivy creeping over the fence and into their yards. But when the neighbors cut them they would always grow back, as if the plants were purposefully trying to bother the neighbors. The neighborhood would sign papers to remove the house but there would always be an unfortunate mishap. Like the equipment truck being barged into by 3 male deer or all of the construction workers getting food poisoning.

The kids on the street would dare each other to go to the front door and knock, or go look in the shattered windows on the side of the house. Nothing really happened though. The house didn't suck the kid in, the ivy didn't grab the kid's legs and pull him in to the thick weeds, a ghost didn't come out and eat them. Not a single scary, freaky, disturbing thing happened. The kids were rather disappointed. They became tiresome of their little game and eventually stopped going to the old house. Until one day, when Charlotte moved to the neighborhood.

All the kids on the block thought that Charlotte was strange. They thought that she dressed weird, had weird hobbies, and just was weird in general. The kids made up stories about her, like how she was actually a ghost vampire. They also said that at night she would go to all the houses and look at the children sleeping. It was very amusing for Charlotte.

Nobody ever saw her family. She supposedly had a mom and a dad and a younger brother. They were never invited to the neighborhood dinners or holiday

celebrations. The kids had found a new amusement instead of the old house. It was 14 year-old Charlotte.

One day Charlotte decided to take a walk. But she was walking in the rain. With no umbrella. And at night. The children called their friends to let them know that Charlotte was out. They stared at her from their windows and pointed at her.

They barely ever saw Charlotte, and never saw her family, so it was a pretty big deal to actually see Charlotte with their own eyes. So all the kids went to their windows and stuck their faces to the glass, their eyes filled with curiosity. The parents would try to tear them away from the windows and get them to stop staring, but would only fail. And the parents would end up watching Charlotte as well. They watched Charlotte walk through the rain as if they were watching an action movie and it was the most exciting part.

The cold rain soaked through her clothes, into her boots, and flattened her black hair to her face. Her bangs ended just above her eyes, which were coated in dark mascara, eyeliner, and eye shadow. Her make up ran down her face. She had thick black lipstick, matching her black shirt and black gloves. The gloves had been cut so her fingers were showing. Her arms swayed back and forth as she walked, her fingers skimming past her short, black skirt that was now stuck to her torn black leggings because of the rain. She had long black boots that went up to her knees, which were now filled with cold rainwater.

The sky and the clouds argued as flashes of lightning brightened the dark sky. She sighed. She loved the rain; she had loved the rain since she was a child. She enjoyed watching the conflicts in the sky. Jumping from puddle to puddle, she felt like a toddler again.

Noticing the odd stares from the children and parents, she realized she had the whole neighborhood's attention. Even the mothers. They would never admit it, but they were watching Charlotte just as curiously as the children were. Charlotte grinned. A brilliant thought crossed her mind.

She turned and looked at the old house. She was drawn to it somehow. It was dark and ominous and nobody ever went inside. I can change that, she thought. Her audience's eyes widened as Charlotte calmly walked to the old house. She pushed the

gate open and it made an unpleasant creak as it moved out of her way. She walked down the path. Everybody gasped as Charlotte reached the porch. She balanced on the remaining floorboards and gently knocked on the door. When nobody answered, she walked to the windows on the side of the house. Then, she climbed in through the window and the children and the mothers could no longer see her.

It was dark inside of the house. The humid air smelled of rotten wood. Her eyes adjusted slowly as she ran her hand along the damp wall, walking through the hallway. Every step she took, the house would groan, as if complaining about her presence. There was a shattered mirror on the wall and she looked at herself. Her face was broken up in to little pieces, not able to find each other and make sense of what her face should look like. She continued through the house and found a set of stairs. She walked up them, making sure that she did not fall through. There was a small window at the landing and she looked outside. She found herself staring down at a pit in the back yard. It looked as if the pit had swallowed many things because small pieces of strange materials were sticking out of the mud here and there. Charlotte ran down the stairs and to the back door and stepped out on to the muddy ground.

She was almost not surprised to find various items spread across the ground and in the pit. She did not see these things from the window because the window was so small and it was dark outside. She walked past various items, such as a headless doll, a set of silverware, a pair of baby shoes, a red wagon, a collection of picture frames, and much more. She picked up a necklace with a heart locket on it and wiped the mud off of the designs on the metal. She tried to open it but it would not pry open. She sighed and stuffed the item in to her pocket. She sat down on a mini fridge next to the pit and looked down.

The pit wasn't very deep; it was only 4 or 5 feet in to the ground. It was quite wide though, and took up most of the space in the yard. The pit had quite a few shovels. Was somebody digging? Charlotte got up and climbed down in to the pit. Her foot slipped on some mud and she landed in an uncomfortable position. Luckily, there was a dirty old mattress under her. She got up and brushed herself off. Splotches of mud were spread across her black clothes. On the mattress lay a blanket and a doll and an old soggy pillow. She got up and squinted in the growing dark.

Shovels were spread across the bottom of the pit, along with pick axes. She picked one up and ran her hand along the handle of it and noticed that something was engraved in to the handle. She slowly turned it over and found herself staring at the words "Enter night". Charlotte put the shovel down and looked around at the other pick axes and shovels. She picked a few up and noticed that each had the words "Enter night" roughly engraved in to the wooden handles. She climbed out of the pit, using different pieces of rubbish as handles. She walked home alone.

After that day, Charlotte went to the house everyday and sat down in the pit, inspecting various items and trying to figure out the meaning of "Enter night". The children (and parents) became more and more curious of what Charlotte was doing in the house, but nobody was brave enough to venture in to the house.

It was one average day when Charlotte made a not average discovery.

As she sifted through the junk lying in the pit using a shovel, she saw a glint of glass buried beneath a sweater and some clipboards. She pushed them aside and closer at the item.

It was a picture. The picture was in a delicate frame; curved wooden designs were carved in to the deep brown wood. She stared in to the faces of 13 people dressed in black, some women, some men. Some smiling, some expressionless. They all looked up at Charlotte as if they were greeting her with their frozen faces. The picture was black and white. She looked at each face carefully. There was a house in the background. She gasped.

The house in the background was the house she was at, except for it was in much better shape. In the picture the roof was still securely attached to the walls and the porch did not have any gaping holes. The lawn had grass, and the trees were coated in leaves.

The man standing in the middle seemed to be the center of attention. He had long hair and he was quite tall compared to the rest of the men. His face was completed with a massive mustache and an unusually pointy nose. Next to him stood a short man who was mostly bald and had stubble all over his chin. He held something under his arm. It looked like a thick black book. Charlotte suddenly became very curious about the book. She walked home with the picture under her arm.

After putting the picture away in her room, she immediately began to search vigorously in the pit for a book. She found nothing for hours, until she came across a small book, which she excitedly opened, but found that it was only a children's picture book missing the majority of its pages. She set the book down beside her and sighed. That black book probably isn't even here she thought. Charlotte walked home disappointed as the neighbors watched her carefully from the windows.

That night, Charlotte could not get the thought of the book out of her mind. She even had a dream about it.

She was in the pit and above her was a hazy purple mist. The yard was barely seeable due to the fog. She was looking around for the book. As she pushed aside various items she came across a black box. She tried to open it but sadly, a large steel lock restrained her. She continued to try to open it. Charlotte picked up one of the pickaxes and attempted to open the box but the pickaxe disintegrated as it hit the box. A shiver ran through her body as she woke up, staring up at the ceiling. The sound of rain pounding against the roof soothed her.

Charlotte looked out the window, expecting to see the familiar view of the house next door. But instead there was a man clinging to the ledge of her window, clawing at the glass. She screamed and jumped up, hitting her head on a bedpost.

His face was pale and his lips thin and colorless, rain running down his face, soaking his hair. His dark eyes were wide with... fear? Pain? Charlotte could not tell. His long black hair drooped down over his face, making him look ghostly. His fingernails scratched against the window, making an unpleasant sound, disturbing the rhythm of the rain. He was trying to say something but Charlotte could not hear him.

After she caught her breath, she got up slowly and carefully approached the window. The man's mouth moved faster. His long fingers motioned to the window lock. The man must have used the ivy and the gaps between the bricks to climb up the side of the house. But why? Charlotte shook her head.

She pulled down the shade, and quickly backed away, almost tripping on herself. She took a few deep breaths and started looking for her phone. A loud thud outside of the window echoed through her head.

She froze. He fell! Is he dead? Thoughts rushed through her mind as she pulled back the curtains and looked outside.

He was no longer on the windowsill and she looked down, afraid of what she would see. But there was nobody there. Charlotte bit her lip, confused. As she thought of other possibilities, she heard a loud thud downstairs. And then a crash. Her heart raced as she locked her bedroom door and pushed her dresser in front of it. Charlotte racked her mind for any memory of where she had put her phone.

Muffled footsteps echoed up from downstairs, along with various thuds and crashes. The man must be looking for something... But what? Charlotte had nothing of value to another human being. Except for... she pushed aside the thought and looked for a reasonable weapon to defend her. Looking in her closet, she pulled out a broom.

Charlotte positioned herself next to the dresser and waited quietly listening for the man's footsteps but heard nothing. She continued to wait for another 5 minutes and heard nothing.

Assuming that the man had left, she opened the door a crack without moving the dresser. Somebody's hand shot through the crack, grabbing her wrist. She twisted out of the firm grip and quickly slammed the door, squishing the man's fingers as he screamed in pain and let go. Her fingers fumbled, struggling to turn the lock on the door.

Panting, she shuffled through her belongings, searching for her cell phone. She ran her hands through her hair, frustrated.

Outside, the man leaned against the door, cradling his hand. He tucked his long wet hair behind his ear and faced the door, wincing as he let his crippled hand fall to his side.

The man's face would not leave her mind. His long straggly black hair, his uneven mustache, and his eyes. The eyes that had been filled with something Charlotte had never seen before. The man... he looked strangely like the man in the picture... Charlotte shook her head. Her vision became blurry and she leaned against the dresser.

Knock... knock... knock. Three clear knocks came from her door. She stood, bent over, frozen.

A voice croaked from outside of the door.

The man flung himself through the door with incredible force; pieces of wood fell to the floor with a clatter as he pushed the dresser out of his way. Charlotte was now on the ground, screaming. She backed up towards the wall. The man's hair swayed back and forth over his face as he stood over her.

The man bent over and stared in to her eyes. He picked up a piece of wood from the shattered door. One fling of his arm and Charlotte leaned against the wall, unconscious.