

A Tale of Industrial Haunting

The last 6 months of my melancholy of a life was spent...operating a machine. I was responsible for making sure the reactors were working satisfactory, so most of my time at work was spent slowly noticing the horrid conditions of the room. Thick black smoke covered the pipes and reactors, while there was also a scent of sweat and gasoline that permeated the dark facility. Sometimes, I couldn't tell the difference between a wall and the standing silhouette of a worker on break.

Making my descent down my apartment complex's ancient creaky stairs, I notice a door open and out came a girl. Her appearance was....a novelty to say the least. Her long green hair curled to her sides, and her fair complexion contrasted with the color of her hair. If it weren't for the soft green in her rounded eyes, I would have considered her more strange than beautiful.

I introduced myself with a "Good Morning, ma'am."

She threw me a grave stare.

"I'm sorry for interrupting you, but I just moved here," I nervously uttered.

"This place is mine," was all she croaked as she abruptly entered her apartment and slammed the door.

In that split second, I saw that her floor was covered with live grass, while vines and tree branches protruded their way out of the deep fissures in her walls. I wasn't really sure about who this woman was, but what exactly did she own?

The day's results from processing earth's resources were extremely beneficial. But I couldn't end the sudden anxiousness that churned in the pit of my stomach. I felt the presence of something dreadful. I assumed it was the hours spent in labor and smoke inhalation, but the pay was far too great to quit.

Upon my return home, the feeling grew stronger. The loud thumping of my heart roared with each step I took through my apartment. One step....thump....two steps...thump...three

steps...and it ceased. I found myself standing in from my closed, oak bedroom door. I concentrated. Had I locked the door? Had I closed all the windows? I stood there. Part of me tried to rationalize my lack of action with not wanting to face...whatever thing my mind was trying to conjure.

As if I were a juvenile, I tried to summon enough courage to open the door and face...it. Since my feet remained stationary, I tried to summon annoyance, then anger. I finally forced my hand to the glossy, dark door knob, and I braced myself. The thumping returned and was more rapid than previously. Before I convinced myself to remain still for longer, I quickly turned and pushed the door open.

I looked up...and scouted my empty room. What was odd was my six foot mirror, and my reflection staring back at me. For a moment, I almost laughed at myself, trying to explain to my mind that I had somehow moved the mirror in my fatigued state this morning...until I saw the pile of dirt that the mirror stood upon.

Logic couldn't explain what I saw. But neither could my fear. Had someone put this mirror here? Why did they do it? What did this mean? I simply cleaned the dark brown pile of dirt from the floor and put the mirror back next to my bed.

The next day was more...odd. In the pit of my stomach, I felt like I there was something...wrong. Despite the praise I received from both my bosses and my coworkers, I felt like I was committing homicide. And the harder I worked, the more it made itself present. My thoughts still periodically pondered upon the events of the night before. Logic proved to me the undeniable truth that I was being...targeted. The scary part was who? I had only arrived in this town months ago. Why dirt? I then thought about the girl with the green hair, and her earthy apartment.

I had to gain some confirmation somehow, and direct confrontation was the only way I saw fit. I sternly knocked on what I expected to be a rigid wooden door, but instead my hand crashed through the oily oak. I recoiled at the sight of the hole I had created, until I noticed the inside of the apartment. The walls were caked with brown mud while deep red veins protrude

the walls. I couldn't tell if my mind deceived me, but I could have sworn that the walls throbbed in a rhythmic fashion. A lady...I'm not even sure it's characteristics could grant it that title...appeared at the end of the hallway. It's oily, green hair sat tangled on its shoulders, and its red eyes glowed with a certain vengeance that I couldn't describe. It's mouth was forever shut by the the vines that stitched through her top and bottom lip. The red of its body was entangled in branches and twigs, while its fingers twisted in opposing directions. It's lips forced the vines apart and it's gaping mouth widened into a sickening smile. And inside the abyss, I saw the reflection of myself, with a sinister grin.

My legs carried me to the only place where I felt...secure. I locked my bedroom door, and I stared at the old oak, anticipating the thing's force entry. Sometimes, my gaze shifts towards the mirror and my peripheral vision captures a glimpse of what I thought was the thing, until I saw my slicked black hair. I've sat here for six hours...I can't seem to remember if my walls were yellow or gray. I inhale and in comes the smell of rotten grass. I heave and out comes black smoke. I cry and out comes a thick black dome. I scream and out comes the mocking roar of machinery. But as I look into the sky and see it turn black, I realize...that it is too late.