**A Ghost Encounter**

On a crisp Tuesday morning, the third week in December, my dog, Luna, and I went for a walk. When we reached the local crossroads, a few miles from our house, we decided to stray from our regular path and try a new route. Our previous route was tedious and tiresome and we wanted to have a minor adventure. As we began to walk along the long, winding road, I listened to the stream gushing along my side. It was a bitter morning, the air was like ice. It was sharp and painful. With one gust, my skin became raw, my ears ached and my hands burned from the cold. The park was deserted; not a soul was to be seen on this long, cobblestone path and the shallow, murky river was now looking rather eerie.

Suddenly Luna barked furiously, she twisted and turned until her leash broke in two and set her free. Dashing to an old tunnel above the river, which acted as a bridge, she darted over the bridge into a clearing behind the trees. She then howled, she seemed incredibly startled and almost hypnotised. I ran desperately across the bridge to her. In front of me stood two immense mills, abandoned and in poor condition; they dominated their surrounding area. They were lifeless and ghastly.

The mills looked sinister and unforgiving as they loomed above my head. They were run down and neglected, they reached directly up to the skyline and stretched right across the area of the woods. The windows were shattered and the red bricks were dropping from the walls. A set of metal steps ran alongside the walls of the building, and patches of overgrown, moss and grass had devoured the mills like a blanket, smothering what was once an elegant red brick building. There were a few minor buildings around the mills whose windows were also shattered. Luna ecstatically bolted ahead to the central mill. She darted directly up the metal stairs, regardless of the hazardous glass shards which covered the stairs. Anxiously I rushed up to the 15th floor, being cautious of my step. Luna looked perplexed and distraught, I did not understand. A dastardly feeling stabbed my body like a knife just then and I felt nauseous and troubled. Something felt wrong. Windows cracked painfully and the harsh sound of bricks hitting the floor filled my mind. Then an ear-splitting shriek pierced my skull. I scanned my surroundings to see a female figure in the building across from me. She took a step forward, revealing she was drenched with blood.

I froze, disorientated. Why was she bleeding? Paralysed, I took a moment to look at her. She was petite and scrawny, her bones stuck out like a skeleton; I noticed she was painfully thin as she stood upright, keeping her back straight. She had an oval, bony face; her cheeks were hollow and her cheekbones high. Her thin black hair hung dreadfully round her face, curtaining one of her eyes and stopped abruptly at her shoulders. The eye I could see, was filled with agony, although it was young and youthful, they were empty and bitter, with dark circles hanging underneath. Her mouth was thin and shrivelled, and freckles coated her entire face. She was deathly pale, but parts of her neck were stained from the blood. She sat emotionless and still, but one or two occasions she was alone and tormented and almost broken. She was wearing an old fashioned, Victorian nightgown with a faint pattern embroidered on the front. The nightgown was soaked with blood and the glass shards had punctured a hole in her sleeves.

Snapping out of my hypnosis like state, I sprinted across the loose floorboards to aid her. floorboards fell whist I was running, my heart began to pound rapidly. Finally, I brought myself to a stop. I felt how cold she was, like ice. A small gust of wind blew through me and as I raised my head to observe the woman, she vanished. There I stood bewildered in an empty room. Completely alone.

Overcome with emotions I stood still a tear or two slipped my eye and as I was trying to hide my feelings. I had encountered an entity, a spirit… a ghost. I felt speechless, my mouth trembled. I was astonished as although I should have been, I didn’t fear this woman. My emotions were leaning more towards pity. She was imprisoned to these mills, unable to find peace. I was very intrigued with her story and was so desperate to know what had killed her so young. My heart was racing and thoughts were circling my mind. I decided I should get off the highest floor on the building as I began to feel nauseous and I needed to be able to think rationally to decide what I should do next. Pacing through the rooms and down the stairs I felt a melancholy presence lurking behind me. I bolted down the remaining steps and ran into the huge plot of grass. I came to the decision that my grandmother would be the wisest person to ask as she worked in the now abandoned mills, a few years before they closed down. Once I was set on my decision, I picked up Luna and began rapidly sprinting home.

I bolted straight through the door into my house, almost taking my door off its hinges. I rain up to my grandmother’s room and collapsed on the bed, exhausted from the day I had. My eyes fluttered weakly and when they reopened it was now 6pm and pitch black outside. My grandmother came into the room, looking baffled as to why I was there. Desperate, I poured my soul out to her, explaining every little detail, she listened intently. She nodded her head understandingly. After a period of silence, she broke it when she told me that a girl named Emma used to work at the mills, but one of the machines malfunctioned and killed her, the mills have been closed ever since. Hearing this was devastating and a tiny piece of my heart cracked. I left and went into my own room to lie down with Luna. I felt compassion and sympathy, as my heart sank when she disappeared because she looked lost and broken. She was just looking to be mourned. Grandma said the mills didn’t tell anyone of the death, not even her family, only workers knew. They were threatened to stay quiet and the mills said they closed due to money loss. Poor Emma, an insignificant death covered up by the mills. I can only imagine she is isolated, alone, unwanted but most of all… vengeful.

By Shannon McMenamy