**The Mysterious Bogs…**

It was a cold, dark, foggy morning; the first day of winter. It was time for the daily dog walk before school. This morning Fluffy (my poodle) seemed on edge. I wondered why? We stepped out into the gloomy street, the wind rustling through the trees whistling like an old farmer. We took a different path from usual into the bog, where the ground was still wet and mucky from the rain fall last night. The air was crisp, piercing my lungs with a sharp sting. The trees seemed to loom over me, sending chills down my spine, making my hair rise and giving me goose bumps. I got a feeling of impending doom. Was someone following me? Watching me? I wasn’t sure…my paranoia increased. it seemed the grass, the rocks had motives, intentions, whispering to each other, for they knew my fate.

Fluffy was unusually close to me as he’d normally run ahead of me and prance on the leaves that had fallen off the trees. The air felt heavy, like the weight of the world was on my shoulders. My stomach seemed as if it had a million butterflies doing somersaults. As I walked I could hear the crunch and crumble of the leaves beneath my feet. The sun that day was low. I could barely see it. It was just a beam of light in the distance, like a lantern. Not a single bird to be seen which was odd unlike yesterday morning. Fluffy and I walked for some bit before, I didn’t recognise the scenery, we had lost our way. The path had ended and I couldn’t see anything in front of me as the fog was too thick and heavy. Suddenly, I saw a small black figure in the distance. I thought that maybe the person could help me or point me in the right direction. Fluffy was reluctant to walk forward and was winning. At that point I didn’t know why, little did I know that I would soon find out…

As I got closer I could kind of make out the figure. Fluffy stopped. He refused to walk any further, so I picked him up and continued to walk with him snuggling into my arms. The figure was a woman. She had long, dark, thick hair. It didn’t move although it was windy which was very bizarre. I decided not to walk any closer to her and yelled “Hello, I got lost and I am unable to find my way can you help me!” I waited but there was no reply just a black hunched-over lifeless figure staring at me.

I took slow, cautious steps. I stared at her face, she was extremely pale, with dark patches, and where the patches were her skin was cracked and to my horror, insects were crawling out of the cracks.

Suddenly she flew at me violently, causing Fluffy and I to fall onto the ground. I looked behind me…she was gone. She had vanished. Where did she go? Fluffy and I were terrified. Our hair rising, our bones chattering, we ran home. I can’t remember the journey home. It was a blank memory.

I am still quite shaken from that day. Fluffy hasn’t been the same; he’s very timid, when before he was outgoing and lively. He doesn’t sleep and it’s a back-breaking, strenuous, wearisome task to try and get him to eat. I told my mum, dad, sister, brother, teacher and my friends about what happened that day and nobody believes me - they all think I’m ludicrous. They’re thinking of sending me to a mental institution and well I think it is ridiculous. So I am writing this to tell you about my story and to warn you!

By Orla O’Neill