

THE GHOST OF MARCI ELEMENTARY

"Why did we have to move here Ma?"

I begged us not to go but we had just moved to a whole other continent.

"Because your dad and I had a great job opportunity in the U.S.A and didn't want to give it up. You already knew that Casay so don't make me explain it again."

Casay is my nickname thanks to my mother. I wasn't pleased with my new room. I took the room with a wide window and a view of what seemed like an old building. It was my same old bed which made me partly better. The wall paper was printed with large, running purple flowers. When I looked outside, I noticed the damp trees and puddled road. I wasn't used to the cold weather in Michigan, so I knew my mother would soon take me to the mall for clothes and hopefully I would find new friends in the neighborhood. I stared out the window at the cold dark building and thought of what it might be. *A house? A school? An old hospital?* I glanced away but I was curious. There was still much more to unpack.

I wandered outside when I finished unpacking the boxes for my room and the kitchen. I fiddled with my zipper as I neared the dark structure, the thick vines wrapping tight around the building. I heard a rustle come from what appeared to be a dead bush. A chill ran up my spine as I closed in on the bush. Just as I reached out to move the ugly shrub, a hand set on my shoulder. I let out a slight scream. I was more startled than scared. I swung my head around to see who had their hand on my shoulder.

"H-hi," a girl in a tan sweater said, her head facing the ground.

"Uhh... hi," I replied, unsure of the situation I was in. The girl slowly lifted her head, her blue eyes perfectly matching her breezy, chestnut hair. She was wearing a smooth tan sweater that ran all the way to her knees, the black leggings fit for the sweater, a matching pair.

"My name is Rebecca. I'm your neighbor and I hope I didn't scare you. I just wanted to introduce myself to the new folks in town. We really don't have any other kids around."

I nodded briefly for a second and then began to speak, "Hi. My name is Casablanca but you can call me Casay. We just moved from Cairo the--"

"I know the capitol of Africa," she exclaimed cutting me off. "Go on."

"So... We just moved from Cairo and I was wondering if you could show me around some time. You know, like, friends," I smiled shyly. I usually have a rough time making friends. I knew it was a bit forward, but I had nothing to lose.

"Sure!" She replied happily putting an arm around my neck indicating our new friendship. I smiled bright and wide knowing that I was so lucky to get a friend on the first day. Hopefully it would last a long time.

Later that afternoon, we invited Rebecca's family over for a feast of grilled chicken and potatoes. I introduced my brothers Luksaka and Douala to Rebecca. My family is named after cities in Africa. The reason for that is my mom wanted our names to be special - after our parent's favorite cities. Anyways, I could tell she was having a great time with my family, asking questions about our diverse culture. We talked the night away, the sun setting before our eyes. By the time we had worn ourselves out, it was close to 11:00pm. Since it was so late, Rebecca was able to sleep over!

As we prepared for bed, I noticed the excitement in Rebecca's face. Maybe it was her first sleepover, too. Thoughts consumed me as I sat on my bed, waiting until Rebecca finished brushing her teeth. *Should I ask her about the building? Should I tell her about my friends? Should I explain to her my parent's new job?* So many thoughts started running through my brain and I tried to discard all of the useless ones but, it wouldn't work. I started to feel like I would explode if she didn't come back soon but finally she returned from the bathroom. I asked her about the strange abandoned area.

"Oh! That's an abandoned school. It closed because of too many student deaths about 50 years ago. It is believed that their ghosts wander around the place waiting for their class, eternally. Ohhhhhhhhhhh," she said, mimicking a ghost. "The place *was* called Marci Elementary School. The name comes from a ritual the school performed, hoping the terrible deaths would stop and to also represent the ones who were lost..." her voice trailed off probably thinking of the deaths, that I later learned were murderous and horrific. I decided to change the subject quickly knowing that speaking of it might bother her.

"So, what kind of stuff do you learn at your school? You know, the one I'm going to go to?" I asked.

"Well, since we're ten, we start learning about coordinates, division, decimals, volume, and a lot more other stuff in math. We will learn a lot more stuff, but I don't have it on the tip of my tongue," she explained. "Since its winter break (almost New Years!), we won't be having school in a bit more than a week." Hearing that we didn't have to start school right away, really lifted my mood so I grinned widely. Soon we fell asleep, the thoughts of school in my mind.

The next few days went by and Rebecca and I hung out together non-stop. But two days before New Year's Eve, Rebecca became ill, and had to stay in bed. I actually was quite glad that I had time to myself, so I could search up the old, haunted school online. I settled in my room turning the computer on with so much force, I thought I'd broken the key. It soon flickered to life, my screen saver a photo of a speedy cheetah, sprinting after his next meal. It brought back so many memories from home, but I tried to push it aside, my mind still on Marci Elementary School.

I opened Google and let my fingers dance on the keys, entering the three words. I nervously hit the enter button, truly scared of what I might find. There were only a few results, most just giving information about other elementary schools. I read over all of them and found

one about Marci Elementary. I clicked on it not prepared of what was to come. It was photos of a young girl's diary. It was hard to read the messy hand writing, but I managed to spell the words out.

Today, Lucile Sepal disappeared during lunch. The aids went looking as always, a useless process I think. I feel like no one listens to my suggestions on a more safe community. Their loss, literally, not mine. My teacher told us not to worry, because we will perform the Maric Letto De Sierra the next day (tomorrow), but I wish we could stop with this silliness and actually get some sense into ourselves. Colette warned us about insulting the school's ways, and I think she's trying to tell us we're the cause of the deaths.

I feel extremely uncomfortable talking about Caroline's death because it was one of the most brutal deaths yet. We were told to hide in our classrooms and lock the doors and sadly she couldn't make it into a class. We heard her screams echo in the halls and when the event was over, her fresh blood was splattered everywhere. I felt sick and threw up, so I went home.

I read through her journal, everything in it gory and evil. But the very last sentences, startled me.

Today Mrs. Kook died. She was too nice to be killed. She has a daughter in kindergarten, Lacey. It's the saddest story I've ever heard of. I wish this school was safe!

I stared at the sentences and read them over and over again trying to see if I'd missed anything. When I realized it was all real, I felt sick. Lacey Kook is Rebecca's mom. The author of the diary was talking about Rebecca's grandmother, the one she hadn't spoken of. She talked about her grandfather, but definitely not her grandmother. That's why she was uncomfortable talking about the school. Because of her grandmother. I knew that I had to look around for a secret in the school. The journal mentioned something like that, so I printed the page out and prepared to go New Year's Eve.

I gathered the materials and left early just to investigate. My parents thought I was going to the nearby McDonald's and then to Rebecca's. I rode my bike to the school, slowing my pace as I neared. The school looked dead itself, even the trees around it were gloomy looking. I took out the page and read the sentence over again. It said the cause of these deaths could be found in the school. I felt possessed to continue investigating.

As I entered the school, rats squeaked and scurried around. I was scared. It was fairly dark, but there was a light source coming from the broken down walls. I still turned my flashlight on and started looking around. I found dry blood on the brown walls and broken desks in the classrooms. I felt eyes on me and slowly turned around, looking. I felt more startled and fell back into a chair.

"Don't chicken out! You know this place was evil, but probably not anymore!", I said to myself. I got up and wiped the dust off of my body and went back on my adventure. As I

entered the hallway, I heard shuffling behind me. I turned around not thinking much of it until I saw a girl. I screamed loudly and then realized it was just Rebecca.

“Why do you keep scaring me?” I asked.

“I’m sorry. I saw you going into the school and I was curious what you were doing,” she responded.

I stared at her for a second and said, “I know about your grandmother.” She stood there in shock, the silence lasting a while. “I know that she was killed here.” She started to cry and I suddenly felt bad.

“I’m sorry. I really am. I read a diary about it.” She nodded and said we should start looking more. I nodded back and let her follow the beam of the flashlight.

We went into a classroom and both shivered, the cold of the night creeping in. It turned out to be the place where they held the ritual. There were burnt out candles all over the room. I nearly fell back when I saw a lit candle. I turned to Rebecca. She wasn’t there. I yelled her name, but no answer. I looked nervously around until I found her grinning a spine-chilling grin, levitating at the same time. She started talking gibberish about how the ritual was done.

“Now you are the sacrifice!” She pointed a finger at me and I rose slowly. Then she put her hand up to my throat and started to choke me. I tried to fight back, but it was useless her power too strong.

“W-w-why a-are you d-doing this?” I managed to sputter.

“I’ve always wanted to place revenge on the ones who killed me. I made the fake journal to make someone go here!”

“Ss-t-stop!” I cried.

“Why should I listen to you?” Her eyes shone red and I couldn’t think. I couldn’t breathe. My life flashed before me. I stared into black. Then I remembered the last thing I saw: True evil.