

## Ghost by the Water's Edge

In my travels, I've learned of many fundamental truths of life. The most beautiful one - in my eyes - 'tis simply the fact that every person is a book. A rich book, packed cover to cover with so many stories. Some joyous, some tragic. Some inspiring, some haunting. Some lively, some quiet. These books are often kept quite closely to one's chest, rarely do others get to read them. However there are times when one's grip loosens, and their story lies bare for all to see. Just recently, I myself bore witness to one such moment.

I hadst been wandering for a few days, when I found myself at the Beach of Glass, a pocket-sized beach - one that thou wouldest fail to notice if thine eyes lacked keen perception - off of the great Lake Huron. This place was familiar to me. Its name decorated the headlines of bulletins everywhere I had traveled a few years past - it bore witness to a seemingly endless tragedy. This place was a graveyard.

'Twas quiet there. Empty. The stillness of this beach - the haunting aura of the salt-heavy air, dewdrops casing the tops of leaves, begging to fall yet never moving - it drew me in. I stood there, matching my breathing with the rhythm of the waves. In... and out. In... and out. I sat there, in the sand, just barely out of the tide's reach. I felt the warmth of the sand as it embraced my empty hand. I closed my eyes as I took it all in. I stayed there, admiring the quaint beauty of this beach. Despite its ample history, right then, at that moment, everything was okay. Time brings healing, and no matter how it may feel in the moment, recovery still happens, life marches onwards. People will be alright.

I must've dozed off, though, as when I opened my eyes, night had fallen upon this beach. Something was different though. Amongst the steady breathing of the waves, there was a trembling, a shakiness in the air, a tinge of saltiness. Awaking from my slumber, the shakiness became increasingly clear. 'Twas another being on this beach, and they were a complete wreck. They were kneeled over, weeping in front of a grave in the sand, one that I couldst swear was not there when I arrived. I sat up properly now, repositioning my spectacles, and I looked over to get a closer look at the poor soul, and I saw a man, skin whitely as parchment - a ghost, so miserably frail.

Luck must have been on my side, as - by the grace of some power higher than I - my presence remained wholly undetected. I sat there, observing that poor ghost of a man. He wept, tears pouring from his face - never once stopping, not even for a second. He sobbed and bawled, momentarily attempting to break the rhythmic pattern of sounds - his waves of tears - by speaking. Every attempt proved futile. Clearly, this wound was fresh, it was far too soon for him to talk about it, he was far too young to experience this sort of travesty. And so I sat. And I stared.

Who knows how long it had been. The sun was slowly peeking its head over the horizon, and the man had finally finished crying. Without a word, he got up, and looked out towards the sea. He paused a moment, taking everything in. He let out a breath. I did the same. Then, he turned around, locking eyes with me. "Thank you," he mouthed to me, tears still in his eyes. I found myself far too flustered to say anything in response! However, this awkward display was wholly unnecessary, as before I could even gather myself, he walked off into the ocean. The waves parted to greet his every step. The sea closed behind him, and he was gone.

I don't know why I was made to bear witness to such a pivotal moment in this man's life, nor do I really know what this moment was. But as I said before, there's times when one simply can't maintain their grip, and their lives lie on the floor for all to see. Clearly, this man was hurting. I can only hope that he's doing better now.

## The Insatiable Mountain

There is a chance that if thou - dearest moth - art inclined to wandering such as I, thou may happen upon a mountain. 'Tis not just any mountain. Many say it is home to a sort of strange magick - something evil. On the faces of those rocky cliffs lie rumors, secrets, whisperings of what lives atop its peaks. Some say that the mountain is where one can meet God. Some say that the mountain is home to the most beautiful forest in the world. Some say that the mountains drives those who climb it mad. Some say that the mountain carries a human-like, -nay- animalistic hunger, feasting upon those who dare enter its forests. What is certain, nobody has avoided getting lost on Blue Mountain.

Of course, that doesn't dissuade people from visiting this insatiable mountain. Nay, it encourages people even more. Whether it's one who seeks thrills and danger; or one who is merely gullible enough to fall for the lies woven by those devils, the ones who speak oh so highly of their god atop the peak, there are few folk who have managed to deny the call of yonder Blue Mountain. Nowadays, the mountain doesn't have the same allure that it did in the past; yet countless memories lay at the foot of the mountain, the memories of those who did not survive.

I recall hearing of a man. A grizzled old man, his lies flowing like a river right off of his devilish tongue. He was the one who spoke of the god up on the summit. I've never met him, he was from far before my time, this whole story was, but I cannot feign a lack of prejudice here, as it would only serve to prove my ignorance to his actions. This damned liar, bringing those who trusted him up to the Mountain, those with pure intentions! He drove them all to madness, fed them to this hungering forest, he was their ruin. I find myself frustrated with him, because I know that I would've fallen for his schemes had I been wrapped up in them. Much like the mountain; my curiosity cannot be satiated, and this man with his promises of God and of beauty and magicks and- Needless to say, that damned monster brought much destruction wherever he went. Although, it was said that he was seen guiding a beautiful lady into the forest, before never being seen again. Mayhaps learning about her will reveal more about him. Only time will tell.

I'm quite harsh on the man, but I do know- for better or for worse- he was human as well. I'm not sure where this slice of the rumor began, but they say that the grizzly old man was merely trying to aid his elder brother, a calmer, more earthly man. The elder brother was said to be the caretaker of the forest, the younger one watching over him. The younger brother cared for the elder, he truly seemed to love him. Despite his sins - the atrocities he'd committed - he helped the elder; he provided for him, he comforted him, he showered him with love and care. Even the coldest of hearts can be host to the warmth of love.

Still yet - even if the brothers had hearts of their own, the mountain did not. Hunger held its very being hostage, feasting upon those who dared trespass on its grounds for decades. Eventually, it curbed its craving for corpses. That is to say, the rumors surrounding its ravenous nature had stopped! But with this, neither brother was heard from again. Perhaps the mountain bit off more than it could chew, or perhaps those brothers met their "god" upon the peak and were done with their scheme here. Either way, the mountain eventually quieted down. At least, that's what they say. I haven't the faintest idea myself, for I have yet to actually go up there and visit it, I'm quite frankly terrified of even the smallest risk of being *EATEN* by a *MOUNTAIN*. So, I shall remain where it is safe for now. Even though at the end of the day, 'tis just rumors that lie at the mountain...