

Short, Dark Stories

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Well, ummm....

A bunch of stories that I had to write for English, I think they all have a bit of a "gothic" edge to them.

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1 - Vampire Story

Halloween is tomorrow!!! My fifteenth one so far, I know it is considered quite childish but I like it. I am dressing as a vampire and Adele as a fairy- as many children of her age do. Michael is taking up the position of a pumpkin and as a result his costume is quite amusing for two reasons: number one: he has long hair- no one ever found out why. Two: he just looks plain freaky as a pumpkin. Adele's costume is obviously pink, and knee length with tights, last but not least, mine is clearly black and Victorian styled. It surprisingly did not cost me a fortune as I made it myself and therefore I am rather proud of it. A few parents of the area continue telling children of the occult and how evil this festival is, but their words do not taunt us children. I am going to help things run smoothly by acting. It will be the normal Halloween festivities- with dozens of Jack 'o Lanterns, candy, plastic spiders and skulls and lastly- but most certainly not least- the story telling and play. "Amy Lynn!" I heard Miss Cunningham yell, as she approached me- I braced myself for the worst, but it did not come, "Amy Lynn! You have a few minutes to yourself, so go do something fun!"

It is therefore just a little while to write before I have to go back to work with carving Jack 'o Lanterns and setting up the stage. The play was the highlight of this evening and my brother is the headless horseman- yes, I know that is a clichéd theme, but we didn't choose it. His costume for the play makes him look like he came straight out of the French Revolution. I am a mere backstage helper, my job is to make sure the costumes fit and that the cast members are all there.

As I toil away with pumpkin carving I notice a battered car pull up into the road, the same one as my mother's- an old, ugly, red Ford.

My brother Michael and my sister Adele are in the car this present moment, or so I presume. I was quite giddy right then- I think the butterflies in my stomach must have been drunk. I had just found out that I am also expected to hand out some candy to the little children and I almost had no time for myself. I see Michael and Adele have just arrived and I would go greet them now, but I see Michael has gone into the woods with his friend and Adele was following, but mom caught her before she could go another step and showed her the jumping castle, after which she was completely engrossed. So I toil away some more, carving pumpkins and setting up props. As a table lands on my foot I gasped, not from pain, but from shock as a hearse just drove east towards the cemetery. I noted this vehicle in particular as one does not see them terribly often. It soon disappears into the distance, past the cemetery. I shall not bore you with further detail, as I am sure it will not interest you.

As dusk falls, the cast prepares for the play. Costumes, gowns, gloves, masks and boots are among the many articles of clothing prepared for this event. Perhaps prepared is the wrong word, I suppose the word I search for is "found", as they have been in a crummy old box for a year in some or other dark, dank storeroom. The crowd gathers on the grass in front of the make-shift wooden stage. One viewer I noticed arrived particularly late, as night set had in. The latecomer had a particularly pale complexion, gaunt appearance and very old-fashioned clothes- her costume, I presumed. Even though she was terribly gaunt and pale with eyebrows that met ever so slightly, she had a pleasant visage nonetheless. I noticed as well, her extreme strength. She moved a large stone that was where she intended to place her- I don't know what it was, to be honest. It resembled a large parasol somewhat, but instead of pink and lacy it was black and had a rather mournful appearance.

The play started and I had no more time to study the audience. Michael is a wonderful actor, I am amazed that I have not noticed it earlier, and then perhaps mom could have been spared the worry. Zillions of thoughts ran through my head as I waited for the end- the most repetitive one being "does the

paranormal exist?"

Little did I know that I was soon to find out. As the play finished I went to the nearest bathroom and changed into my costume. I went outside to do my make-up, as public bathrooms always smell putrid, and this one was no exception. I walked into the light of the garden lamps with a small mirror in hand. Resting the mirror on a rock I proceeded to apply base. Before I knew it my application had been successfully completed. I was putting my earrings in when an unexpected force pushed on my shoulder. I was amazed to see that it was the woman with the parasol, if one could call it that. I was extremely surprised at the fact that I didn't see her in my mirror.

I got such a shock that I dropped my earring into the long grass, after searching for a good two minutes I asked the woman for assistance. Within a second, she located the item and presented it to me. "Thank you..."

"Helena" replied the woman, without me asking what her name was. I was surprised, but replied with my name, though I found this character very curious indeed. We greeted, I tried to shake hands, but instead she curtseyed. It gave a very refined air, her dress flowing with a timeless grace to her bowing form of which I cannot begin to describe. She wondered for a moment then said "Oh sorry, I have fallen into my country's habit of the curtsey"

"What country are you from?"

"I was born in England and I immigrated to Transylvania in 1795, but returned to England."

I did find this rather curious for two reasons, firstly because we were in England and secondly because she moved in 1795, but I presumed this nothing more than a slip of the tongue. I did not ask further questions as I thought it rude and unwise to do so, but instead told her how I had come here and my schedule.

"Oh, so you are a young one then?" asked she "It must have been hard to fit that into one night."

I replied with all the courtesy I could muster, though I found her rather odd "Yes, I'm only 15" I think now this would be the right time to reveal to you, reader, that I looked several years younger.

"I see" said Helena, with a manner I could imagine from Marie Antoinette. "How on earth did you fit all that into one night?" I replied and told her that I had worked in the afternoon as well, after which she became slightly colder, but friendly nonetheless.

"You seem strong for your age- exceptionally strong," noted my new friend, "It is rather curious."

"Oh, I'm really not that strong," said I, trying to maintain all modesty.

At that very moment Miss Cunningham came running at me, yelling to hand out candy. A thin mist appeared out of nowhere, and Helena had disappeared.

I had then time to reflect, as it does not take up a lot of brain power to hand out lollipops to six-year-olds. One of the many thoughts that whirred through my head at that moment was how oddly Helena spoke and how she had not opened her parasol- which I thought as a part of her costume. Another oddity was my difficulty in understanding her slight Eastern European accent, although it was not as much of that as it was the way she used her words. They were pronounced perfectly, despite her accent and she said them with a certain air that would have taken me at least a century to perfect. At the precise moment Adele came up to me Trick or Treating, a bat whirred past my head. It was rather tiny, much smaller than the fruit bats over here- that was all I could see at the speed the creature was flying. I got a sudden fright, the sort of one you get when a bug flies into your forehead, which caused me to drop the packet of sweets.

"You are so clumsy, Penguin." Adele told me, she always had to make up nicknames for everyone.

"Yes, I realize, small fry." I decided that it was just to give her a nickname, and to always refer to her as that- no matter how stupid the name was.

"Meeehhh!" said she, with the sort of voice that only a small child could muster.

"Instead of making noises, could you please help me pick up these sweets?" I asked her playfully.

We just bent down to pick up all the toffees that had fallen on the ground- which was about three quarters of a packet of one hundred. A thin purple mist arose and Helena walked by. The mist I supposed was nothing more than incense.

“Helping the mortals?” asked she, with a slight chuckle,

“No, the mortals are helping me.” She seemed perplexed by my laughter, but laughed with nonetheless. With that she bent down and with one swipe, picked up the remaining twenty toffees, placing them quickly in the bag.

“What’s the time?” asked she. I replied that the night had gone quickly and that it was almost two in the morning.

“I must go!” cried she in shock, and swiftly fled eastwards.

Mrs. Cunningham had come to inform me that my shift was over, although I found it most likely that she had seen me drop the sweets and that she didn’t want anymore “mishaps”. As I was walking with Adele, mom rushed in, grabbing her Adele’s arm and shoving her into the car, telling me that Michael and I could go home when we wanted, just as long as it was before six in the morning. I found this curfew ludicrously late, but I did not complain.

After half an hour I grew bored and rather hungry as I hadn’t eaten all night. So I made my way to the food stalls and bought a hamburger, even though it was far too greasy for that time and proceeded to find Michael. Before long, he ran up to me, telling me to get rid of my hamburger, “just to be safe” and to follow him. We ran eastwards for about five minutes, by which time I was quite out of breath. We walked into the cemetery where there was a large concrete bench, covered in carvings of skeletons. I felt exceptionally uneasy there. We were greeted by Michael’s friend- I thought him a pathetic excuse for a human being, but that is beside the point. He was quite big boned, which was emphasized by his costume being (of all things!) a rabbit. A rather empty head he had, which probably explained his choice of attire.

“Dare you to go in there!” said Josh, pointing to an old mausoleum, dating back to 1796.

“OK!” replied my brother, although I was sure that it would smell worse than the bathrooms I had been to earlier.

As Michael entered the woman’s final resting place- I found it horrific to do so- I busied myself with reading the plaque on the ornate concrete structure. Though the silver plaque was old, stained and half covered with ivy, I could make out these words:

_____ Siddal

Born 1776 in Yorkshire

Died 1796 in Romania of blood loss

We ___I ___ thou

But do not _____ for ___ pa__

I heard the sound of a lid creaking open, a loud hissing sound and then a loud shriek. Michael came stumbling towards us, leaning on me for support. His face was completely devoid of blood and he fell down on numerous occasions. I placed him down on a bench, trying to calm him, but he got some of his hair in his mouth. While I put it behind his shoulders, I noticed two small, red dots on the left side of his neck. Though I was foolish not to note it at first, maybe the paranormal really DID exist. At the time I thought he had gotten snared on a branch. I was stupid not to see the signs.

I asked my brother what was in the tomb and he replied to me:

“Re-me-m-be-r -wha-t st-or-ie-s gran t-ol-d us? The -one-s w-ith....”

At that moment he fainted. Whether it was from shock, exhaustion or blood loss I could not tell- but I was sure mom could. I ran to my home, where mom was asleep. Therefore I summoned Adele- desperate times called for desperate measures. We ran to the cemetery, although Adele was slow, but Michael was missing. He did not have the strength to move far, yet still he was not near. Do not think ,reader, that Josh was with me then- he fled when Michael screamed.

I told Adele to keep searching for Michael while I tried to see what was inside the mausoleum. I saw the open lid of the un-decomposed coffin. The body inside looked healthy, but with a ruddy complexion underneath the substance which, to my horror, I found to be blood. Michael was in a corner, looking pale, but far better.

The corpse in the coffin... hissed! It stood up.

“Why do you bother me?” pleaded the vampire.

We stood silent, I recognized those features, the dress- Helena! I couldn’t scream- I was rooted to the spot with terror.

Through the open door I saw the sun coming up, the two vampires fled in terror to the coffin. I ran out the door and closed it, wondering what would happen to Michael’s undead life if I left it open. I screamed for Adele and she came screaming to me.

“Scary- dead- pale-blood” she gasped. I hugged her but she failed to calm down.

I carried her home, where mom was still asleep. I don’t know what I was going to tell mom, but it would sound like gibberish.

Later I asked Adele what happened.

“I was looking for Michael and then these scary pale people came up to me. They have hypnotizing red eyes, they looked evil.” With these words my traumatized sister burst into uncontrollable tears.

I got her a glass of water, which she drank eagerly. She had to calm down, which she understood without me telling her. Mom came down the stairs and stated that we were up so very early, yet she was oblivious to the horrific ordeal that had taken place yesterday.

Mom started cooking breakfast- which was bacon and eggs. She put on her ugly apron with chickens printed on it. Her red hair waved as she turned to look at us, stating in a loud, shrill voice that we “looked ever so shocked”.

Adele and I didn’t eat our bacon, with good reason. Adele’s pale skin looked even paler, since she had still not recovered from the shock. Her blue eyes made her look like she was on the verge of tears.

“Where is Michael?” inquired my mother.

“Oh, ummm...” Was Adele’s unpolished reply.

Adele kicked me under the table.

“Oh yeah, he’s sleeping over at Josh’s house. They’re probably sleeping, it’s been a long night, so I don’t think you should phone.” Was my hasty and pathetic answer.

The day continued as usual, but Adele and I spent more time together- talking about what we were going to tell mom. We finally decided that at nightfall we should take Michael to mom and show her. There was absolutely no other way.

As dusk came we “noticed that we had run out of milk and were going to fetch some in order make milkshakes.” We walked until nightfall to fetch Michael and once he was found, he refused to touch us and he once ran off for apparently no reason- after which he would touch us but his eyes became a shade redder than they were. He donned his sunglasses to minimize our mother’s shock and we walked on, although he walked a bit too fast for us. We arrived at home, with mom hugging him so hard that he could have died of suffocation if he hadn’t pulled away so quickly.

“Mom” said I,

"Yes, Amy Lynn?" asked our then oblivious mother.

"Look at Michael's eyes and teeth." I blurted out, thoughtlessly.

She removed his sunglasses and gasped.

"MICHAEL! How many times have I told you NEVER EVER get contacts under my roof!!!" Screamed our mother.

"Just look at my teeth before you freak out," Michael said.

Mom did just that, and gasped in terror.

"That's why I didn't go out in the day,"

"I-never-never" gasped my mom "I've heard those tales, never thought they were true!"

The following week was spent in silence. I went to my friend Anna Leigh's house to get away from the tenseness. It was westward from our home, and the route was very scenic. I spent as long as I could there, for two reasons- one: her gentle and quiet manner pleased me much, as I am the sort of person who needs such support, now more than ever. Two: I just needed the change from absolute silence. As I walked home at dusk, I was completely engulfed by the scenery and the flowers of the imminent spring that brought such colour to the outskirts of Yorkshire. It soon grew dark, or at least it felt so, for I was enjoying the sights and smells immensely. I passed the grave yard and remembered that I had forgotten my shawl there, I decided that no harm could come to me if I ran quickly. Another thin mist came about my ankles for no apparent reason. Helena came out of nowhere. She laid her hand on my shoulder. From that moment on I was utterly hypnotized, I couldn't move. I saw her friendly eyes wanting to give explanation but from the moment her hand touched my mortal flesh, her eyes went deep red. I felt the very blood drain from my veins.

I had died.

Not died as many imagine it. My soul lingered above my body, but uncontrollably went back to it.

As soon as I woke up I ran for my undead life. I woke up in my bedroom, which caused quite a bit of trouble, as I was presumed dead by all. I knew nothing of myself at that moment.

I must start my life afresh, I cannot go back now.

2 - Crime Story

Letter from Mina to Lucy

1 June

Dear Lucy

It seems ages since we last saw each other! How are you? Jonathan and I are going to Venice on business for 5 days. We depart on the 6th and arrive back in England on 12th of June. Do you think it would be possible to meet us at London on the 17th?

Sincerest wishes

Mina

Lucy's Diary

2 June- I received a letter from Mina today. I hear she is going to Venice, how interesting that must be! The people, places and artworks. The list is endless! I shall meet her in London on the 17th, I think. Kaleigh has been acting strangely the past week. I would like to know what is going on in her head! She is very silent nowadays. I must go; George calls me!

Reply from Lucy to Mina

Dear Mina

Things are going nicely, I got a raise. Abraham, who works in the same department as me looked bitterly disappointed and somewhat angry. I shall be delighted to see you on the 17th, I would enjoy seeing you again and I think George would also, although he does not show it. I suppose you also wonder how my family is? Kaleigh is not her usual, happy self; she is very quiet and has been for the past few weeks. George has been doing well in his new job. He fancies he will get a promotion, but I don't think he works quite hard enough. How do you think Venice will be? Please write when you get there.

Best wishes in your travels

Lucy

Mina's Diary

6 June- I write this on the airplane. The man in front of me (oh, what a tall, grizzly-looking man he is!) was stopped by the security at the airport. As I was running by I heard one of the staff telling another that he had "an unidentifiable metal object." They were talking in hushed tones like it was gossip. I shall just write on in the hopes that the above-mentioned man does not catch me writing this. Jonathan and I got stuck in traffic on our way to the airport, which made us just on time. A pale man with a German accent helped us with our bags, however few they were. I suppose he wanted a tip, but there was no time. We ran towards the terminal, which is where I heard about the metal object. The trip so far was nice, but not as good as the adverts say. I am getting drowsy, so I shall stop writing for the present.

Jonathan's Diary

7 June- we arrived very early in the morning. We got on the gondola to our hotel which (thank goodness!) was quite close. I need some sleep; the plane was too crowded to get any. Tomorrow I have a meeting with the over seas business partners. My suit got crumpled on the way here. This entry is very short indeed!

Mina's Diary

8 June- Jonathan is at his meeting and will be for another few hours at least. I think I should see what this beautiful city has to offer. I have saved up a lot of money so I will go spend a little bit because after all, what's money for? I believe that a famous store is having a sale. Off I go!

Later- I bought a pretty little pair of shoes at the above-mentioned store. I think it is called something like Palazzo de Forte. I have not the faintest clue what it means, but the items were nice and would cost your arms and legs if there were not a sale on. After purchasing the shoes I wandered on to the path and (fancy that!) there was the same, grizzly, tall man I saw on the plane! I could see his features for the first time. They looked Greek.

He had a strong, low brow; large nose and black hair. He then noticed me and ran at me with a somewhat deranged look in his eyes but at the same time seemed somewhat polite. He asked me how the trip was and I replied timidly and soon we drew into deeper conversation. At one point he asked where my hotel was, which suddenly reminded me that I needed to get back to my hotel. I arrived there just before Jonathan.

How reassuring was seeing my husband's large, green eyes and his neat brown hair! I showed him my new shoes, he approved of my choice. I did not tell him of my experience, for he looked tired. I think the time zone is confusing him.

9 June- I am sad that our trip is coming to an end. Two and a half more days until we depart! I met the same man at our hotel but this time he sounded rude and imposing. He looked pale as opposed to the healthy, olive complexion I had seen yesterday. He was smoking. This confused me, but I did not linger long. I must go now.

Later – I went to post the letter and, I could swear the man, Abraham I think, is following me; stalking perhaps, I hear how dangerous that is!

Letter from Mina to Lucy

Venice has been very interesting and scenic so far. I am sad that is drawing to a close. I bought a pair of Italian shoes in a very fancy store. Venice is idyllic and picturesque, or at least it is from a tourist's point of view. I will tell you all about it when I get back to England.

Miss you

Mina

Lucy's diary

10 June- I have resumed my old habit of sleepwalking. I have woken up, fully clothed outside on the sidewalk on numerous occasions. Perhaps it is because of Kaleigh. She always gets moody when something bad is going to happen. Thank goodness Mina is coming back! The post is often very slow, but recently I have gotten letters within a day, I am confused; excuse me while I ponder this for a day.

11 June- Mina is most probably on her plane now, I hope she has a safe trip. I hear how safe planes are, but I don't really believe them. I suppose that is me being cynical again. This is probably the shortest entry in living memory, but my life is quite busy nowadays because I am now expected to work harder due to my raise.

12 June- I hope that Mina arrived safely, I should call her but I can't find my phone, nor my cell phone. This frustrated me terribly but I felt too weak to fuss. I cannot wait until the 17th; I would sure like to hear how Venice is! I would go if I had the money at the moment. I must go back to work, I wouldn't be writing here if I had not made this a habit.

Mina's Diary

11 June- Our plane left at midnight, which was incredibly irritating. The plane was also very crowded, which did not allow much sleep. I was thankful that the crowded conditions caused the grizzled man to sit quite far from me. I am too tired to write further. So long and goodnight.

12 June- I was awoken by a stewardess offering me cold coffee, eggs and a hard, dry roll. I devoured them slowly as they could not get any colder. We are landing and I must stop writing now.

16 June- I am eager to see Lucy again, I was too tired to write for the previous 4 days so now I shall write a very long entry: I exited the plane slowly as it was crowded as mentioned earlier. The pilot bade me a goodbye and I left. Baggage was not nearly as simple. I waited approximately 30 minutes for my first and another 10 for my next. I realized I was back from my 'holiday'. I was so tired that 3 cups of coffee at the nearest cafe could not lift my spirits nor wake me up. How grateful I was for the escalators! Jonathan drove us back home, how happy I felt when I set my eyes on our front porch!

I unpacked immediately and slept for almost 4 hours until I was woken by a phone call. Jonathan answered, which I was thankful for because I could not talk then. I suddenly thought of Lucy and what I would say to her tomorrow. Jonathan entered the room looking flushed. I must go for the present.

Later- Jonathan drove me to Lucy's house. I wondered what could not wait till tomorrow; I was greeted by the sight of police and (oh no!) forensic detectives! I later found out that Lucy was... killed. I was and am horrified. A stout, middle-aged man with a slight moustache asked me; "Miss Wilhelmina Winstead?"

"Yes."

"I have grave news, your friend Lucy has been murdered. Do you have any information?"

With this insensitive and unpolished question I broke into tears.

"She- k-e-pt a -d-di-ar-y..." I sobbed, "and I h-a-v-e s-ome -l-le-t-e-r-r-s t-oo."

If I had not made a habit of pouring my soul into this book I would not be able to put this into here.

17 June- I gathered, with my husband's help, that the stout man was Lucy's boss and that he was apparently very, very concerned. Jonathan is looking sick, perhaps it is the stress. I am also not feeling well myself.

Jonathan's Diary

18 June- Mina and I have been working hard at this mystery, I think you could call it. The stress is certainly getting to us. George is grieving at the loss of his late wife and Kaleigh is more solitary than ever. Today we go to the police and (hopefully!) the lawyer's office.

Later-The only evidence is the diary and the letters along with blood, which so far is found to be Lucy's. The killer is sly. Very.

George's Diary

19 June- I am amazed that I can write in here. The police have found DNA of another person. We are one step closer to the trial. Lucy's estate must be solved. Her will states that her possessions and property must be shared equally between myself, Kaleigh and Mina. We have money for the trial. Finally.

Mina's Diary

20 June- We go to the laboratory and the autopsy section. Some DNA, in the form of hair, is identified as a foreign man with the same appearance as the one in Venice. The trial day draws nearer. I drive with Jonathan, Kaleigh and George to the lawyer's office. My husband and Kaleigh wait in the reception and George and I see the lawyer. "Who do you think is responsible?"

"Abraham," we said unanimously "he worked with Lucy."

"Why do you think so?"

"DNA." We replied quickly.

"We have this sorted out, more or less. This Abraham has which motives?"

"He was really bugged when Lucy got her raise." Was my unpolished reply.

"He seems guilty enough." Stated the lawyer whom was known to the community as Mr. F. Lee. He was not a particularly dashing or young man but he was a lawyer nonetheless.

We returned to reception and told Kaleigh and Jonathan. I had told Jonathan about Abraham at this point for it was critical. Kaleigh was shocked, her bushy auburn hair nearly stood on end. I cannot write further, for duty and work call me.

24 June- We entered the interrogation room in silence. We saw the man- no, the thing- at the opposite end of the room. "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" asked the guard "Yes," replied Abraham "With my right hand on the bible."

The judge asked us to produce evidence and we brought out the diary and letters and told her of the hair.

"What do you say in your defense?" Asked the tall, pale and clever detective.

"I had attempted to protect Lucy but failed. I was far too late to help. But a man was wearing a pair of smart shoes" Replied the accused.

Then the detective asked, " Did you see the killer?"

"Yes, and what a pudgy fellow he was!" replied Abraham.

"Could you identify him?" asked the detective.

"Maybe. If I saw a photo."

"Good."

What happened then was alien to me. Something I could only expect to see on television. The detective showed Abraham numerous photographs of men who fitted his description of a "stout, middle-aged man with a slight moustache" who lived in the area. He recognized one as the killer. "THAT'S LUCY'S BOSS!" exclaimed a very excited George. We left very satisfied and horrified at the same time.

Kaleigh's Diary

25 June- We talked about Mom's boss's murder motives until dad recalled that her boss had been stealing money from the business, which was the most likely answer we got. Maybe he thought that if he killed mom the secret would not spread. He probably gave her a raise as an attempt at a secret bribe.

That would explain why Abraham looked so put off when she got the raise.

12 July- I have finally found my diary. The court case is tomorrow. I can't write, I must help dad, Mrs. Winstead and Mr. Winstead think and tell them my ideas.

George's Diary

13 July- We entered the courtroom in silence. My late wife's boss- nay, scum- sat opposite us. The judge seemed a harsh woman, and old.

"Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole and nothing but the truth?" asked the bailiff.

"Yes" said the defendant coolly.

"Where were you on the night of the 15th of June?" asked our lawyer.

"At home."

"Can you prove it?"

"No, it's too far back."

"What about your shoes?"

"What about them?"

" I hope you don't mind if I look at his shoes, your honor?" Mr. Lee asked the judge.

"If you must." Replied the judge.

The whole courtroom was silent. There was indeed blood on his shoes.

"Then why is there no sign of a struggle?!" challenged the defendant.

"She was sleepwalking." Replied Mina; even though it was out of turn she had ensured our win. Several guards were required to restrain me. We were victorious at last.