

A Broken Heart

By Jalian Jiang

I awoke to the sound of my mother's screams piercing through the walls. My eyes flung open, adjusting to the darkness, but even then, I could barely see.

As I got out of bed, a cold breeze blew past, but none of my windows were open. How strange.

I cautiously walked down the hall. I was always concerned about my mother's screams because she never showed any fear.

After my father left us with little to nothing, my mom and I had to start over in this small town. She worked three jobs but still made time for me.

Anytime I was afraid, lonely, or scared, she was like a lion standing in the crowd. Always cheering me on, always protecting me, always there.

The hallway was lit only by the shimmer of the full moon radiating its cold energy from the night sky. No stars shone; the moon was the only thing bright enough to see in the sky.

Another cold breeze blew from behind me. I whipped my head around, expecting to see my mother, but only a shadow replaced the silence that followed.

I squinted. A shadow?

"Who's there?" I called, and it echoed from the walls.

An odd creaking sound startled me from behind. "Mom? Is that you?"

I tiptoed to her room with a sense of foreboding and peeked inside the slightly ajar door. The usual lump on the bed was gone but there was no sign of struggle. I opened the door and stepped inside.

"Mom? Are you there?" To my surprise, her window was open, and it was blowing a cold breeze that sent chills up my spine. "Mom...?" I called again.

Suddenly, I saw a shadow flicker and the window and door slammed shut. “Mom. This isn’t funny.” I whimpered.

“Well... Aren’t you a brave soul?” A diabolical voice cooed.

I whipped around. “W-who’s there? Show yourself!”

“Well, if I must...” the voice said again, this time louder; nearer.

I grabbed a table lamp from the nightstand, holding it like a sword. “If you hurt my mother, I won’t go so easy on you. Show yourself!”

A figure emerged from the shadows. It was a spider-like creature; three long legs, as black as the dead of night- five long arms, each with nails the size of my head. But as I looked at its face, I screamed.

Its head was made of dead bodies, piled on top of one another. But in the center of its torso, my mother’s dead body hung from it like a ragdoll. Her face was a mask of horror.

My mother was dead. I went limp. I just didn’t care anymore.

The creature lunged. With each scratch, each blow, each stroke of pain, I felt more alive than I’d ever been. The monster raised its claw, preparing for the final blow as my mother’s body dangled lifelessly against its skeletal figure.

I smiled when it stabbed me through my broken heart.