

The Ghostly Soldier

By Chloe Chan, grade 7

The night was black all around me and the moon's faint light cast an eerie glow on the house. As I crept towards the abandoned home, a sinister breeze ruffled my hair and knocked the decaying leaves to the ground, almost like a warning not to get any closer. Undeterred, I continued forward, determined to complete my mission and banish the entity that dwelled in this abode. I pushed open the rotting door, and the beam from my flashlight lit up the foyer. Cobwebs covered the furniture and the musty air filled my lungs. Twin doors line the walls surrounding me, yet something, whether supernatural or not, told me that these rooms did not hold the ghost I was looking for.

Each footstep yielded an unwanted creak of a floorboard, but I was not worried. I had faced more fearsome monsters than a simple ghost.

As I walked around the house, I noticed that my foot felt strangely wet. After taking off my shoe, I realized that there was a deep gash on my foot. With each beat of my heart, more blood oozed from the wound, but after ripping off a piece of my shirt and wrapping it around the cut, I was ready to continue. I began hiking towards what I hoped was my monster, and with each step the shadows grew longer and longer until I came to a lone door. With a light tap, the door gave way revealing a dark continuous hallway.

My flashlight flickered before promptly dying.

“Of course, it died right here,” I grumbled, “Ghosts despise flashlights.”

I turned around, trying to remember where I put my spare flashlight, but I suddenly stopped in my tracks. “ No, no, no!” I exclaimed. Rather than seeing the door I came from, there was a simple gray wall.

I traced my hands along the wall, desperately trying to find a lever or button, anything to let me out of this hallway. But there was nothing. It was seamless, as if there was never a door in the first place. After having searched the wall, again and again, I sat down, wishing for a way out. Yet as I stared down the lengthy corridor, a mysterious light seemed to ignite in the distance, beckoning me towards safety and a way out. I knew it wasn't safe, but the light flickered, enticing me to come closer and bask in its warmth.

Hopefully, I jogged towards the glow, but halfway through the tunnel, the light disappeared, leaving me alone in the endless void.

I heard shuffling and movement and before I could react, the walls had formed a tight box around me, barely wide enough for me to stretch out my arms. Murals depicting horrifying scenes flashed onto the walls, each more gut-wrenching than the other. One depicted two armies on the verge of an all-out battle and the next, a single skull in a barren wasteland. The third was a severed head, its mouth held open in an eternal scream. I spun in a slow circle, soaking up every detail of the mosaics until I came to the last one. It depicted a soldier in a torn uniform walking away from a bloody battlefield. Though the scene was horrendous, what scared me more were his eyes. One was blood red, like the color of his enemies' blood behind him. The other, a pale yellow like the dying sun.

My eyes lingered on it for a while and before long, it seemed like he was walking towards me, like a character in stop motion. Unable to move away, I pressed my back against the wall behind me, praying this wasn't real... I pried my eyes open and staring back at me was the soldier, no longer a figure in a painting, but a living creature. Or rather an *undead* creature.

“G—get away from me!” I exclaimed, “This is not your place! You are a trespasser in this home.”

The soldier tilted his head and spoke in a voice fit for a devil, “ Rather, it is you who is the trespasser. This is my home, and now you will pay the price for coming here.”

He lunged at me and pinned my throat to the wall, his hand frigid and stiff. At the same time, I realized that my wound had begun to bleed again and was bleeding through my shoe.

“What are you doing to me?” I gurgled out, the edge of my vision beginning to cloud.

“ I need a body. My current one will soon fail me. Your beating heart is the only thing stopping me from taking your body already.” His other hand reached towards me and whereas one hand was numbingly cold and real, the other was translucent and molten hot.

He reached through my chest and suddenly, a fiery pain blasted through me. I felt a slight tug and when I looked down he was holding it, my hea-

I awoke, coated in sweat and panting hard. I looked up, certain I would see the ghost from my dream glaring back at me, but there was only the aged Victorian ceiling above the foyer.

I wracked my brain for any reason as to why I was here in the first place. But it came up empty.

“Maybe there are some clues around this place,” I murmured to myself.

As I began to walk, a small sting rippled through my foot. I had cut myself. Yet only a couple drops of blood slid through the cut even though it was quite deep.

“Why so little blood?” I pondered.

Continuing my trek, I wandered around the house and eventually began to walk towards a smashed mirror. Shards of glass lay on the ground, but part of the mirror was still intact. I glanced at it, and my breath caught in my throat, for the mirror reflected back my eyes. One was as red as the blood trail left from my foot and the other, a yellow as pale as the dying sun.