

Sat, 30 Aug 2008

11:43 PM

A Piercing Scream

She struck the match against the box, igniting a flickering flame at the top. The flame started gorging on the thin piece of wood that was the match. She lifted the small violet candle and tilted it, transferring the flame from the match to the wick.

The flame was in a hole, dug by the many burnings of the candle. The pool of melted wax at the bottom was hard and cold now, but in only minutes it would be clear as water and hot enough to singe the hair off of your hands. Jaime didn't seem to care that the candle was almost burnt completely down, almost unable to use. As long as the flame was still going, for now, she was safe.

Jaime walked to the window which had been thrown open wide in an attempt to let in a slight breeze from outside. Instead of a cooling breeze, the window had only allowed the annoying bark of a dog into the room. Jaime couldn't see the street from her window, which made predicting what the dog was barking at nearly impossible.

She carefully lifted her candle and cradled it in her hands as she walked down the hall. There was a large window with no curtains that stood in the living room. She peered through it, into the darkness, trying to make out the streets and other houses that surrounded hers.

She gave in to the fact that all she could see was her own reflection and the burning candle. She turned on her heel, muttering under her breath.

"...barking at nothing... whole house and my candle... damn dog..." Jamie shuffled her feet as she walked back down the hall towards her room, her haven.

Her feet carried her to the center of the almost empty room, where she sat, still mumbling to herself. The candle, which was still cradled in her hands, dimmed slightly. The threatening of the candle to extinguish itself scared Jaime. Her hands rushed out in front of her, setting the candle on the cold hardwood flooring.

She watched the flame dim even more, almost out. Her gaze intensified, her eyes seemed to be filled with fire themselves and with that, the flame came back to life. It was brighter this time than it had been before. The shadows it cast were larger, but still the light wasn't bright enough to reveal what hid in the corners of the room.

"Yes...keep burning..." She whispered words of encouragement to the candle; urging it to get brighter so she could feast her eyes upon it.

"Jaime, what are you doing?" A tall lady with blonde hair appeared in the doorway.

"Nothing...oh nothing... burn candle..." Jaime barely looked up at the lady before she had vanished into thin air.

Jaime's attention was no longer on the candle; something on the wall had seemed to capture it. Her pupils contracted and dilated as another figure appeared in front of her.

"Jaime, we have to help you. It's not safe for you to stay here alone."

"No! No, you can't take me!" She snatched the candle off of the floor and huddled in a corner, listening to the sounds of the dog. The man had disappeared in seconds.

Hot tears trickled down Jaime's face, landing in the melted wax of her candle.

"...no...no, you can't... I'm safe... the flame..." She tried to soothe herself, convincing herself that the flame would keep her safe.

A sudden breeze rushed in through the window extinguishing her only sense of security, the candle. Jaime's eyes widened in terror as the darkness enclosed her in the corner of the room.

"The flame... matches... where are they? Come here matches, I need you..." her voice was panicked as she crawled on her hands and knees feeling for the matches.

A small sliver of moonlight had slid into the room, creating oblong shadows upon the walls. Jaime's hands flew over the ground when she saw the first shadow.

"No, no... The flame... I'm not safe!" The dog barking outside suddenly got louder as a gust of wind caught the trees outside, moving branches over the moon.

Jaime was suddenly plunged into darkness, unable to see, only able to hear the gusting wind and ragged barking of the dog.

"That dog... scaring everyone... where... flame..." Her voice trailed off again as she moved towards the center of the room. Her left hand held tightly the shrinking candle while her right hand finally closed around the matches.

She fumbled in the dark, trying to light a match hurriedly. In the process of removing one of the matches from the box, she managed to spill out the entire thing.

"Oh, no... matches..." She held tightly to the one which she had grasped and tried to strike it against the box. Suddenly the wind stopped howling outside the window. The dog's barks were silent and a voice behind her nearly made her heart stop.

"Jaime... I'm back..." His voice was low and held a hint of laughter. The tears that had finally dried on Jaime's cheeks were once again flowing. The echo faded into nothing and Jaime was left in silence that even her own sobs couldn't break.

The matches lay forgotten with the unlit candle on the floor. Slowly, Jaime turned around to see the face of the person whose voice she heard. She knew he wasn't there, but she felt that if she reached out in front of her she would feel his lifeless body. His ghostly white face seemed to stand out in her memory, the way his eyes were a vivid shade of blue that contrasted with his dark hair.

"No... please..." She sobbed gasping, finally breaking the unbearable silence.

"Please what, Jaime?" She thought desperately that it was all in her head. It wasn't really happening, it couldn't.

"You're not here... the flame..." Her voice was shaking, but her sobs had become almost nonexistent.

"Yes, Jaime. The fire did kill me. Yet, here I am." His voice echoed through her head.

"The fire... I'm safe... My candle..." Moonlight slithered back into the room; proving to Jaime what she had already known. She was alone, completely and utterly alone.

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"Mark, wake up! Mark!" A terrified voice interrupted a scream of fright. Diane shook the arm of her husband, trying to wake him up. "Mark! Wake up!" Finally he began to stir.

"Wha's all the fuss about?" His words slurred together slightly as he sat up in bed and clicked on the light to his left.

"Mark, Jaime was screaming." Diane didn't really know her neighbor, Jaime, but she did know that she never left the house. No noise ever came from the house, and now that there was noise, it didn't sound pleasant.

"Ok, Diane, we'll go make sure she's ok." Mark, who had finally woken up all the way swung his legs over the side of the bed and shoved his shoes on his feet. Timidly, Diane followed in her scruffy blue slippers.

"Mark, what if something's wrong? Maybe there's a burglar or something. Shouldn't we take some form of protection?" Her voice was hushed, afraid of breaking a deadly silence that had grown over the

town.

“No, no, we’ll be fine. Just go ahead and call the police, then we’ll head over.” Mark started to climb down the stairs into his front room.

“We don’t have time to call the police now, and it might be pointless. Let’s just make sure she’s ok.” Diane followed her husband hurriedly, trying to calm herself.

“Ok, ok. Off we go.” Together they walked out their front door and down the driveway. The night was dark, several stars shone in the sky and a moon presented itself as full for the evening. There was no sound as the elderly couple made their way to Jaime’s house.

“Sounds like everything is ok,” said Mark.

“Yes, I guess-” Diane’s sentence was cut short by a high pitched screaming that sounded as if it would break windows emitted from the house.

The couple ran to the door, fearing the worst. They knew that after the fire Jaime hadn’t been quite herself, but she would never scream like that for no reason at all.

Mark’s hand rose to the door and knocked. He shouted, trying to make himself heard over the screams. They died away, but the sound of footsteps near the door never came. Slowly he opened the door; his heart pounding in his chest.

There wasn’t anything in the house. It was completely empty, and silent. Diane followed her husband off the front step and into the house. They walked down the hall, following an echo that still rang from the screams. They headed straight for the only room whose door was open.

They stood in the door way, wide eyed and frightened at the sight they were greeted with.

“Diane, the phone; call the police.”

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“You said you found her in her room, curled up on the floor. She was covered in blood, with only matches and a candle around her?” The voice was clear yet confused; trying to pry the truth out of the woman.

“Yes, we heard her screams and thought something was wrong. My husband and I, we knocked in the door but her screams only just died away.” Flashing red and blue lights stood outside the big window with no curtains.

“Thank you, ma’am. You and your husband are free to go.” Diane left the house and met her husband in the driveway before walking to their house next door.

“Chief, she’s covered in blood, and there’s no weapon here. There’s nothing at all, just blood.” The officer stood in the hallway of the entirely empty house, puzzled.

“The neighbors said she used to live with a guy, but there was a fire. He died in it. That’s when she stopped leaving the house, after the house had been fixed.” The chief studied his notes, trying to make sense out of the incident.

“She must have been crazy, Chief.”

An ambulance pulled into the drive and medics rushed to the back room. They found Jaime’s lifeless body covered in blood and unharmed. The only other things in the room were an empty box of matches, and a candle with no wick.

They carried her body on a gurney to the ambulance and hoisted her in. The police officers shut the door, and locked it.

“I wonder what happened; the death of a woman who went crazy after the loss of her husband.” They walked away; knowing more had to be done.

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“I told you, the fire didn’t kill me Jaime. It only took me to a different place. But I found a way back to you.” His deep voice echoed through the house.

“How did you... why did you... thank you.” Jaime’s voice joined his, although this Jaime didn’t mutter or whisper, her voice was cheerful.

“I missed you, Jaime. I wanted you to be with me.” His words stunned the silence again.

“I need you. I went crazy without you.”

“I know, but it’s all over. We’re together again. This time, nothing can stop us.” Their laughter joined together as an echo that seemed to last forever.

Security: Public

Location: Not Specified

Mood: Not Specified

Music: Imaginary - Evanescence