

The Carnival Creature

As you walked through the gate into the abandoned carnival, you peered ahead at the sign in front of you, the rich red of the sign was fading and the intricate gold letters were now close to illegible. As you continue further, you took a deep breath in through your nose and your senses were filled with the traditional scents of a carnival; popcorn and candy floss with an underlying scent of crisp autumn leaves. It occurred to you that it was rather strange for the scent to still linger considering this place had been abandoned so long ago, it was as if its ghost manifested itself in the form of the comforting scent of a carnival. As you continued down the dirt path, you passed by stalls of stale popcorn, churros and other varying foods you would typically find in a place like this, but you noticed that the closer you got to the big tent, the stronger the comforting scent got. Then your eye got caught on a hoopla stall and you couldn't resist walking over. This used to be your favourite game as a child. You decided to toss a few hoops onto the polls. As you got one on, the lights blinked pathetically and the stall emitted a sound similar to that of a cat being slowly run over by a car but you could still hear the familiar tune somewhere in the wailing cacophony of sound.

After the wailing was done, you heard a crashing noise which seemed to have come from the big top. You turned around quickly and saw that a part of the white and dull red tent had collapsed in on itself.

You started running over to the tent, making sure not to trip over your shoelaces. You reach the tent, your senses now being intoxicated by the sickeningly sweet scent, you open it and you are shocked at what you find. A conglomerate of varying carnival foods and attractions, you could see stale popcorn stuck in a dull pink candy floss looking substance, as you snapped out of your trance, your eyes moved up to the creatures "face" ;two hoopla rings with a green jelly bean in the middle for eyes, strawberry laces for lips and what seemed to be ice cream cones for teeth. You gasped as the creatures green eyes met with yours. You try and stand still, maintaining eye contact, your breath heavy and hitching every so often, suddenly the creature lunged at you and a strained scream left your throat as you stumble towards the exit. As you reached the fold of the tent you had entered in, you were overwhelmed with a sense of nausea, your head spinning and your vision blurring. You felt the urge to start wretching but as you went to do so you felt your legs become encompassed by the creatures form. You tried to wriggle free but the strange substance only continued to engulf your body. At this point the only sounds you

could hear were your own panicked yelling and the sound of the pink mass moving up your body; it sounded like the fresh crunch of the first footstep on a snowy day mixed with the unbearable sound of polystyrene being rubbed together.

You stopped and tried to formulate a plan in your head. Your first thought was to pull the creature off of you but as your hands met the wriggling mass, you let out another yell, the substance felt like fibre glass and on inspecting your hands you could see that they were bleeding profusely. You decided to give it another go, this time ignoring the pain and tearing the sticky pink constituency away from you; you fell to the ground and pulled the mess off of your hands, watching the blood drip down your arms. You finally worked up the energy to leave the tent but when you emerged, the carnival was different.

Once a colourless, desolate wasteland, the carnival was now completely lit up, rides spinning and flashing. You stumbled over to a man you could see manning a stall, when you got to the stall the man turned around. Another scream left your mouth. The man had a horrifically disfigured face which seemed to be oozing with the pink substance. You felt your heart pound in your chest as your breath got shakier. Turning your head towards the marquee, you could see that it was

now completely repaired, standing tall and proud. You stood still for a second, considering whether you should go back to the tent or if you should run for the exit. The tent seemed to draw you in but you decided that running to the exit would be the better option. The second you started running, the space around you started to shift and distort, the dirt path was now a cobbled one and the stalls and fences grew up into buildings and you realised you were now running down a slim, dimly lit alleyway. You looked up and saw that the only light source for the alley were paper lanterns strung up under the violet sky. You started your pace back up again, looking around yourself to make sure you weren't being followed, you weren't sure if you were still going in the direction of the exit, heck you weren't even sure if there was an exit to this place, but you felt yourself being compelled to go the way you came and you had a sneaking suspicion that way led back to the tent and you sure as hell weren't going back there. As you continued to run, your suspicions were proved to be correct as you saw the pink mass creep out from behind the buildings you had just come from. It spread up the buildings, even coming from inside, smashing out the windows. The mass grew and started racing towards you. Being chased by a pink tidal wave of carnival foods wasn't quite how you envisioned your day going but nevertheless this was

your reality right now and figuring out how to escape it was your only priority in this moment.

At this point, your legs were growing tired; you were fast but the monster was faster. You could feel it growing closer to you. You turned to look behind you and witnessed the form start to change, now protruding out of the pink wave was what seemed to be the head of a great white shark, still made out of the sticky pink mass. Then your heart dropped. The wave was starting to crash, you saw the shadow of the beast's mouth loom over you. You sped up. Your arms felt heavy, your palms felt sweaty and your breath was heavy. Was your last thought really about to be how much you wished you could be at home eating your mums spaghetti? Suddenly a thought came into your mind and as you saw several pink teeth come into your vision you dive through one of the windows to your left. You hit the ground with a dull thud and a slight crunch as you landed on glass.

“Go investigate the carnival, they said, it will be fun, they said.” you mutter to yourself as you stumble to your feet. But when you look up you let out a sound which was somewhere between a groan and a yell.

You were back in the big top.

You decided that you couldn't run from this anymore.

“What do you want from me?” you yelled into the empty space, “I’m not scared of you!” you hear a laugh come from the tent, it sounded like that of an audience in a circus who had just witnessed a clown get a pie thrown in it’s face. You look around yourself but you couldn’t see anyone or anything around. Only rows of wooden seats around the edge of the ring. Seemingly out of nowhere, a ball rolled under your foot and caused you to stumble backwards. Another laugh erupted from the audience. This time you turned around and to your horror you saw an audience of reanimated corpses which seemed to be stuffed with that all too familiar substance. Then a voice rang out through the tent.

“Everybody give it up for the Carnival Creature!” and on cue, you heard loud footsteps thudding from the back of the tent, and then it walked through the tent and all of the stuffed corpses started to clap. At this point you were more tired of seeing it than scared and you had seen so much pink that your vision was starting to go green.

“So? What do we thing audience, do they live? Or do they die?” all of the audience members leant forward and threw their hands toward with their thumbs down. While you were looking, the creature lunged at you and pinned you down, you heard the audience roar with delight.

You try squirming out of the monsters grip but it was no use. Is this how it ended, here in this weird alternate reality, the only witness to your struggle being victims themselves? No. You were determined to leave. Suddenly something caught your eye. A bucket of water. Your mind thought back to all those videos you had seen of Raccoons trying to wash candy floss and how it would dissolve. You strain your arm over to the bucket and tip it over, water spills over the floor and starts dissolving the creatures arms which we're holding you down. You go to run but it's no use, the creature hadn't dissolved but had instead become a hard tar like substance, you were completely and totally stuck. And then, it happened.

You feel the creature encompass your whole body, and then it forces it's way into your mouth and down your throat, you felt your jaw dislocate and your cheeks start to tear. Your panicked eyes darted around the room and you could see that the room was now just like it was when you had first walked in, but now there were corpses propped up, the goo still filling them up. And then you realised that this was the fate you were to succumb to. You feel the sticky constituency push further down your throat, scratching it as it went down, filling up your lungs. You were choking on candy floss, your own blood and vomit, the taste was rancid. The creature still continued to move, filling up your

nose and ears and then everything went silent. Your body was writhing and contorting in ways it shouldn't be able to. And then you felt it force it's way into your eyes, you wanted to scream but nothing happened. The last thing you feel is your entire body being filled up with the creature's, your skin is stretching, your bursting at the seams. And then, you stop moving.