

The Unknown

The sky was as dark as the devil's soul, brimming with churning, vaporous clouds. A violent downpour crashed over the rooftops and flooded the streets. A heavy, ghostly mist descended upon the earth, eclipsing the surrounding weatherworn town and cobblestone streets. Suddenly, a blinding flash of light erupted, revealing a hunched, cloaked figure. A jagged, livid scar ran across his cheek. In a blink of an eye, he vanished like a wolf in the night, taking the shadows with him.

Leah jerked out of bed, dizzy and confused, - feeling an overwhelming sense of terror rattling her. She could only remember fragments of the nightmare. An unsettling image of a hunched figure crossed her mind. She could hear a bloodcurdling scream ringing in her ears. Outside, a radiant sunrise had awoken. The first rays of sunlight lit up her room and the dawn chorus of melodic birdsong drifted in. Despite the pleasant atmosphere, a cold, eerie chill hung in the air. A familiar barking sound tugged behind her consciousness as Leah tried to make sense of her dream. Shaking it off, she climbed out of bed and headed downstairs.

After a simple but appetising breakfast, she decided to clean out the attic to keep herself busy. Leah had been battling flashbacks of the imaginary hunched figure since morning. The strangest part was that she could have sworn that she had seen him before. Heading up the stairs, she passed Charlie, her beloved pet dog, crouching down and emitting low growls at the staircase, his hair standing up on the edge of his back. Suddenly, he let out a small whimper and raced off, hiding under a chair. Giving it no thought, she skipped up the stairs, two at a time.

At the foot of the attic door, a smashed glass bottle held an ancient note. Reaching down on her knees, Leah clutched the note with shaking hands. In the centre, written in bold, lavish text, it read; "You're next!"

As she read the note, it burst into flames.

"I must be dreaming." She mused to herself.

Brushing it off as a practical joke, she grabbed the nearest cardboard box and opened it. Inside, she discovered a smooth, polished amethyst hanging on a necklace. Astonishingly, however, she was surprised that the crystal's natural, deep lavender tone had flecks of

different shades of blue. Dazzled, she shone the crystal in the sunshine, expecting to see a wide array of bright colours shimmering on the wooden boards. To her horror, the amethyst burned in her hand, shining so brightly that it nearly blinded her. A vaporous, ghostly mist spiralled out of the crystal, becoming heavier and heavier, almost suffocating her. As Leah fell to her knees, quick bursts of fire appeared out of nowhere, illuminating the room with an unsettling glow. A faint sound of cryptic, eerie chanting and heavy footsteps echoed around the room, slowly becoming louder and louder. Emerging from the fog, a far too familiar hunched figure appeared, this time clutching a crystal vial filled with a foggy, green elixir. Leah recognized him now, it was *him*.

“*You!*” She exclaimed, slowly stepping away from him knowing just too well what was about to happen.

Sweat licked down the back of her neck. A heavy feeling of dread and regret swirled inside her. He snapped his fingers and the churning mist erupted around his feet, spiralling around him. With a second click, the fog coiled around Leah’s ankles and wrists slowly becoming thicker and thicker, imprisoning her in the room.

“Got you.” He grinned.