

Claire before

Claire could have known she should have been scared of the dark. Claire knew the grin. She had seen it when the dark came. Claire was a child of the light and she had been old enough to remember what had happened, but the sheer shock of it all had buried the memories deep in her mind. But still, she was there.

The week the dark finally came people were watching its arrival. No one had realised that the ferry hadn't come in that week. That there were no tidings from the other side of the sea, where the dark had come first. People there would know what the dark would be like. But everyone was busy with the dark. The wall of utter darkness that loomed over them.

Of course there were some, who were saying the dark would bring bad tidings. That evil was upon them. Those were the ones, who fled eventually.

The family of Claire was not eager to welcome the dark. They made their preparations. They bought a new kind of candles, the dragon wax candles. And they stayed home. They took watch in turns so there was always someone awake in case the dark would arrive earlier than expected.

The day the dark would really fall over them people stood by the shore to be part of this great event. Claire and her family did not. They watched from behind a window on the first floor of their home.

"Mom, why can't we go watch on the beach?" Claire had asked.

"We have no idea what will happen. In here we can light a candle and keep it going, but there it could be blown out. So just to be sure."

Claire just thought her mom was a scary pants.

"Can we open the window at least, mom?" she whined

Her mom sighed and opened the window. There they stood and gazed at the nearing dark.

Claire grabbed her mother's hand.

"Will we be okay?"

"Yes dear, we will," her mom whispered as she looked to her husband, who was holding the youngest of the family, John. The fear was clearly visible in her face.

And they had good reason to be afraid.

A young couple was the first. Hand in hand they jumped in the water and ran towards the dark. It wrapped itself around them and they laughed out loud. The people on the shore smiled to each other and stepped forward. There was nothing to be afraid off. Claire leaned a bit further out of the window. She wanted to be there with the others at the shore.

A next couple of people were enveloped by the dark. They laughed as well. Someone ran in and out of the dark. He was then partly visible before disappearing or reappearing. People were having fun.

A couple of young women ran toward it and plunged into it.

"There is nothing to be afraid off, mom," Claire exclaimed. Mom nodded.

And then the world changed.

The laughter stopped. People in the dark started to call out. "Who's there?" And then they started to scream. They started to cry for help.

Those who were still outside the dark yelled: "Where are you? I'm here. Run over here."

Meanwhile, they walked away from the still progressing dark.

"Mom, what's happening," Claire cried out. "I don't know. I don't know," her mom stammered.

Claire put her hands on her ears to shut out the screams.

Claire had turned to look at her mom and did not see what happened next. One of the women staggered out. She was missing an arm and a big chunk of flesh was ripped out of her side. Her intestines were hanging out. She collapsed a couple of feet from the dark. The dark which seemed to have stopped moving. Two men ran to her and tried to pull her to safety, but they were enveloped by the dark, which suddenly started to move again. And now with greater speed. One of the men had immediately started running and could be seen trying to escape. Sometimes he was visible and sometimes not. But he was being raked when he was in the dark and his body was showing more and more wounds. The last time he staggered forward his face was torn off. Claire saw her mom's face losing all colour and wanted to turn around.

"No!!" her mom yelled at her. Claire froze. Never had her mom yelled at her before.

The dark pushed forth. More and more people did not make it to a safe place. No one really knew what a safe place was. In horror Claire's father and mother stared at the massacre and listened to the death wails. Claire started to cry.

The distance between the house and the dark was getting less and less. The time before they were going to be in peril was getting less as well. All were frozen in fear and they were going to die if they did nothing. The dark harbored deadly monsters, and they were closing in rapidly.

Just in time mom got to her senses.

"Claire! Close the window! Close the window, Claire!"

She herself turned and started to gather the candles and matches.

Claire turned and reached out. She grabbed the handle and for a second stopped moving. In the dark, which was now just feet away, she saw a grin. A fanged grin.

"Hi, Girly whirly," the grin said as a black claw shot forward. It grabbed Claire's arm and would have pulled her out of the window if her father hadn't pulled her backwards hard. The window closed and just as the dark would have entered the room, the dragon wax candle flared up. Claire saw the fanged grin disappear inches before her face. The black claw evaporated leaving a bloody mark, which would never really heal.

"Bye, Girly Whirly. Bye-bye. See ya."

And she would, many years later.