

“Claire. Claire! It’s time for bed.”

“Coming mom!”

Claire came running into the living room.

“Where were you?” her mother asked.

“Out back, mom.”

“In the light?”

“Yes, mom.”

“Remember. Always stay in the light.”

“Yes, mom, I know.”

“Now, off to bed.”

Claire left the room and went upstairs. Her mother called after her.

“Keep the light on, dear.”

“Yes, mother!”

But Claire was not afraid of the dark as her mother was. She extinguished the bright flame of the dragon wax candle. Instantly the bed room was totally dark.

Claire sat quietly on her bed, waiting listening. Nothing happened.

‘See mom, ‘ she muttered to herself, ‘there’s nothing in the dark.’

She just finished her thought when the dark went darker and the silence more silent. It became colder. Claire’s first thought was that she was just imagining things, but then slowly the key in the lock on the window started to turn. Claire could just make it out in the dim light of the stars. She froze in panic.

‘The light. The light!’ her thoughts screamed. She dared not to get off her bed, but she had to find the matches. Slowly she moved to the edge of the bed and slowly the key turned. Then quickly, she jumped off the bed, snatched the matches from the small table in the corner and jumped back on. She did not notice that the window was pushed open. Claire opened the match box and started to strike the matches one after another. Some flared shortly, others broke in two and then she finally managed to light one.

In the dim light she saw a grin, a fanged grin.

“Hi, girly whirly. Soooo, you’re not afraid of the dark, are you now.”

The grin blew out the match and the darkness took over again.

“You should be, girly whirly, you should be.”