

THE PAINTING

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

MONA, 8, pretty, arrogant, races into the room and jumps onto the bed, squealing.

MONA
FASTER! He's after you!

KATE, 11, shy, fragile appearance, catches up with Mona and flops into the mattress.

Both girls laugh loudly.

Suddenly, somebody from under the bed drags the blanket with Mona and Kate on it. The girls SCREAM and the yank stops at once.

Mona places her index finger to her lips.

MONA
Shhhh!

Kate sits still, only her scared eyes blink.

MONA (CONT'D)
Charlie... Now he's in no mood for playing.

KATE
How do you know?

MONA
He told me.

KATE
(frowning)
Mom says you've made up Charlie.

MONA
YOUR mom says bullshit.

KATE
Don't talk like that.

Kate looks down.

KATE
She's your mom too.

MONA
No! She's my STEPMOM.

Kate shakes her head with a scoff.

KATE
Why then haven't I seen Charlie?

MONA
(bursts out laughing)
Who pulled the blanket?

KATE
(uncertainly)
You...

Mona stops laughing. Her face turns serious at once, eyes squint.

MONA
He is REAL. What me to prove?

Kate shrugs her shoulders.

Mona grins and jumps off the bed.

MONA (CONT'D)
Coming?

She runs out the room. Kate hesitates for a second, but follows her. They run through the dark hallway, make a beeline for a

DOWNSTAIRS.

The stairs creaks as they descend.

INT. HOUSE - CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Mona and Kate stand in the doorway and look at the dusty stairs leading to the poorly lighted room.

KATE
I'm not stupid. I go down...
(Kate points downstairs)
...and you'll slam the door.

MONA
(rolls her eyes)
I won't.
(crossing her fingers over
the chest)
Cross my heart.

KATE
(irritated)
No, go there yourself.

Kate turns back to go away.

MONA
(teasing)
CHICKEN!

Kate stands still. She looks hurt.

KATE
(threatening)
Close the door and MY mom grounds
you.

Mona sneers.

Kate descends the stairs. When she is in the middle of the staircase, she looks back to check the door. It is opened and Mona smiles in the doorway. Kate keeps on going downstairs.

She scans the room. Wooden planks and garden tools lean over the walls. Boxes are scattered here and there. The room looks messy and dingy.

KATE
There is nobody. I'm going back!

MONA
Look better. He likes playing hide
and seek.

Kate sighs, looks around again. A tall canvas beside the wall catches her eyes. A threadbare sheet covers it partly. Kate approaches and yanks it off.

It is a human height painting of a night sinister woods. Clumps of trees grow up into the dark sky. A veil of mist floats over grass.

Kate stares at the drawing, grimaces.

KATE
(to herself)
Kind of creepy.

The sound of creaking stairs.

Kate looks back, but eyes nobody.

KATE
I hear you!

She looks at the canvas again. The dark human figure appears on it. The figure stands beside a distant tree. Kate looks closer. She is perplexed.

The cellar door slams shut.

Kate runs up at once and pulls the handle.

KATE
Mona! MONA! I promise mom will
ground...

The sound of creaking branch beneath as someone wanders
through the woods.

KATE (CONT'D)
...you.

Kate goes down and looks around. The cellar is empty.

She casts an eye over the canvas. The dark figure changes its
spot. Now it lurks in the leafless crown of the tree which
stands closer. Two yellow eyes glow brightly on the pitch-
black face. Kate is frightened.

KATE
(screaming)
MONA, OPEN THE DOOR!

She draws back and steps on the wooden stick. It creaks
loudly. Kate lets out a shriek and looks down. Wooden
branches, bark and dry leaves cover the floor that looks more
like a forest one. The mist rises over the floor.

Kate looks at the picture again. Now the figure stands behind
the closest tree. The long-fingered hand encircles the trunk.

Kate screams and turns back to run away, but bumps into Mona
standing behind her back.

Mona's eyes turn completely white. A mad smile plays on her
lips. She pushes Kate onto the picture with all her strength.
Kate passes through the canvas like a portal.

Mona stares at the canvas. The figure walks away dragging
unconscious Kate.

FADE OUT.

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by OKSANA SHAFETOVA