

Unremembered Loss

For all the news and information from the world of Hathrac, and for the story, Unremembered Loss.

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My Short Story from last month received the “Most Detailed” award, not the best. So here I am again with a different type of short story. Still 500 to 750 words, Maze, labyrinth or circus, trapdoor or secret passage, and insects. Bonus for a 3-way love story. To get future copies of the newsletter, sign up at www.douglasgclarke.com/lists/?p=subscribe

Chasing Reflections

by Douglas G. Clarke

Left or right? Chris saw her image looking back at her from the mirror. She looked left - the narrow corridor disappeared into a fog, both walls vanished into an infinite reflection of each other. To the right the hall was the same. A drop of sweat fell from her brow.

Chris jumped back when a hundred images of Julie flashed on the walls around her and then just as suddenly disappeared. “Bitch,” she said under her breath.

Left. If I always go left I can't get lost. She turned left and started walking. The fog cleared as she walked further, then her image was walking towards her - reflected in a mirror twenty feet away. Crash. Pain shot through her head and arm as she suddenly stopped.

“Ouch!”

“Watch out for the glass, stupid. It's not just mirrors,” Julie's voice echoed through the room.

Chris took a step back and rubbed her nose. She raised her other hand slowly, until her fingertips touched their reflection. She took a step backward, running her fingers along the glass wall.

“I hate you.” Chris yelled. Her left hand trembled as it trailed along the glass, her right clenched in a fist. “Just give me back my ticket.” Chris dropped her head - her body shuddered. A moment later she took in a deep breath, brought her fist down against her leg, and then lifted her head - teeth gritted. She spun around, moving her right hand to the wall and extending her left in front of her. Walking quickly, she headed back down the hall.

When her hand dropped away from the wall she turned, moved her hand to the left wall, and headed down the side passage without slowing. Another turn. A dead end. Turn. Turn. Dead end. Turn. Dead end.

“I'm almost through. How about you, looser?”

Chris felt a tightness in her chest as Julie's words echoed around her. Her right hand was a fist again and she pounded the wall in front of her with it. She stumbled as the floor moved and she realized that she was turning around. As quickly as it has started, the movement stopped.

“Great,” she mumbled, *Following the left wall won't work, because the wall are moving. What now?*

She started walking again, hand extended, but slower than before. Left. Left. Dead end. Left. She stopped, panting. Chris unfastened the top two buttons of her blouse and fluttered it - causing a slight, but welcome breeze.

“I hope you get out soon, girlfriend. I want you to be able to watch me use you're ticket. I can't wait to feel his lips on mine - they'll be sweet, but even sweeter if you're there.” Julie's hateful laugh seemed to come from everywhere.

Chris was almost running. The turns and dead ends blurred into one. She abruptly stopped when Julie's image appeared all around her. *I've got you now.* Chris began running, bouncing off the walls. Julie's image appearing and disappearing. Then her image appeared framed by daylight.

“You loose.” Julie vanished into the light.

Chris smashed into another dead end and fell to her knees. Tears ran down her cheeks. She stood up slowly and started to walk back down the hallway, arms outstretched, eyes cast down. She stepped over a lollipop. A moment later the importance of it screamed in her head. She spun around and focused on the thin line of ants that ran from it.

Chris followed the line and in a moment she was looking across the fairway towards the kissing booth. She watched in horror as Julie handed her ticket to Robert. Chris was running now, trying to scream, but nothing came out - Robert place his hand behind Julie's head and pull her towards him.

Watching in slow motion, the kiss seemed to last forever. Chris reached the booth, stopped and stared. Julie's kiss over, she turned around and faced Chris - a smile on her face. Neither girl spoke. Julie's smile grew as the blood drain from Chris's face. It appeared Julie was about to say something when another voice stopped her.

“Oh! There you are Chris. We heard you lost the ticket you bought, so the guys decided to chip in and buy you a new one - well ten actually.

Robert stepped pass Julie and put his hand behind Chris's head. His gentle, but firm embrace pulled her to his lips. As they touched, Julie's face went white, but Chris didn't even notice.