

Victoria Shrote

Gingrich- 3

10/6/15

Gothic Story

HAPPY PARTY CHRISTMAS TIME NO ONE DIES

He walked through the dulled and solemn roads of Natas-ka , the sky overcast in a thick sheet of cloud and hazed over such as his head was. He wiped away snot on the rim of his nose with the thick sleeve of his green duffel coat, his hand rubbing against the ungroomed stubble on his face. In his mouth he held onto a Marlboro cigarette and took in deep inhales despite the fact that it set fire to his raw throat, but it did not faze him; he would not care if his hair set ablaze and melted his very figure to the ground.

The sides of the road he travelled were lined by worn down and shabby town homes stuck in between each other, creating walls and walls of living spaces with only alleys to separate them. The only accessories of the road being the black lamp posts littered in advertising and rusted trashcans taking up whatever space was left. A dump city, he considered it; a home for those who had succumbed to poverty or could find no way out. Everything about it made him furious: the clouded days, the disparity of the people, the godless hookers and gigolos on the streets.

He could not focus on his misery for so long though as every thought he had would send pulses through his skull, alcohol running through his system and destroying his cognitive and motor abilities. At one point he allowed his foot to slug behind a little more than it had been and the tip of his worn Nike sneakers was caught in a crack on the street, his body tumbling down in

a spiral. Luckily for him, he supposed, was that his daze left the bleeding nose numb to his senses.

“Hey” a voice piped up to the side of him as he lay on the ground in defeat of his own disparity.

“HEY!” Once more she spoke, with more demand for reply.

He craned his neck upwards to see an impending figure looming down on him, sleek, black hair cascading down her sides, wisps of it fluttering in the light breeze that came with the gloom of the eve. She had gold hoop earrings and wore scant clothing such as a striped blue and black tube top and jean shorts; in her mouth she held a cigarette, same to his own. To the average man she was a lost soul, born of failure and diminished by tribulation, but through his rose-colored, dazed glasses, she was a goddess; a savior if one would.

He slowly got to his feet, droplets of rain gradually falling from the blanket above. When he found his footing, he saw that he towered over the woman by a good foot, his thick build heavily differing from her petite size. She herself was looking him over: he had no intense characteristics that set him apart from any other man (save for the bags beneath his eyes), but she knew that he would have to do.

“You alright, stranger?” She asked, her mahogany eyes sparkling in the darkness that surrounded them.

He gave her a blank stare back, trying to formulate an answer with words lost in the fog in his head; defeated by his own alcoholic disarray, he could only give a simple nod. She gave a lipped smile, her blood red lipstick smudging at the creases where the lip met cheek.

She dug into a side bag which hung next to her jean shorts, which rode up close to the edge of promiscuity and public indecency, and pulled out a plastic pack of crumpled tissues, taking one from the packet and giving it to him. Unsure of her gesture, he looked down at it and then back at her to see that she was tapping the skin beneath her nose.

“You’ve got a nosebleed.” She said.

Embarrassed at his obliviousness, he placed the tissue to his face and wiped the blood away; hoping the blood coming from his nose would crust over and stop. He returned his gaze to the woman.

“You look like a man out of luck” she said, a breath mint sitting on the middle of her tongue. “I’ll make you a deal. Fifty bucks and I’ll take you out for the night.”

He knew it; she was just another slut on the streets, but something about her was different from all the other disheveled men and women that he had come across in this rat city. She gave off a radiant glow of trust and respect that most would only sense in higher up society. So, despite her pale and sickly skin, her excessive makeup, the bedazzled jewels on her deep choral blue painted nails, and the liberal amount of cheap perfume that covered her body, he agreed and allowed her to grab his hand and pull him along the sidewalk of the streets, rain now coming down in a steady assault. They turned the corner to Haloti Street, the main hub of Natas-ka with faded Christmas lights strung from lamp post to lamp post year round, street vendors crowding the sides leave for the entrances to various bars and shops, all in poor states with black bars over the windows, paint peeling down the walls, and windows chipped and scraped.

She took him to a hole in the wall with the name *Muerte de Sol* hanging in front of the door, a pub solely opened at the late of night for those with no choice but to wander in the

darkness. She led him through the green door and into a rather empty bar, only a group of men playing pool and a woman spending pennies slowly on a gambling machine, awaiting a man with loneliness tattooed upon his soul to prey on. They sat at the bar, the red stools bolted to the ground while the stuffing of the cushions started popping out where the cover had not been sewed back together. Lights hung from the ceiling by white, plastic protected wires, precariously swinging from time to time whenever the heater cranked back up.

She sat down and signaled the bartending woman to them: A large, thick woman with short blond bob and a square chin, her only real defining feminine physique being her thick lips long eyelashes. She leaned up against to them with her arms against the bar table, her body reeking of cigarette smoke.

“What do you want Dez, you whore?” She had a thick German accent and she had a scowl which permeated through him.

“You do you have to hurt me like that June?” She joked. “This is my friend...” She waved her hand to him as a signal for his name.

“C-Conary” He coughed.

June looked to Dez with a squint, as though she were trying to warn Dez of the consequence of her actions.

“I’ll be right back; I’m going to go use the restroom.” She left Conary at the bar to collect himself and to prepare for another set of drinks for the night.

While Dez was gone, June leaned close to Conary, examining him with her nose nearly an inch away from his own.

“Leave that woman now boy.” She bluntly remarked before bringing her head back away from his, returning to the cup she was wiping with a rag.

“She doesn’t seem that bad.” Canary muttered in return.

“Listen to me if you know what’s good for you, you’ll leave this place and that harpie behind.”

“Why?”

“People that meet her tend to, lose themselves.”

“What do you mean?”

“What does what mean?” Dez asked when she came out of nowhere and sat back down.

When she returned, Canary noticed that the scant tube top that only covered the necessities had been replaced by a grey long sleeved sweater.

“Why the cha-“

“It’s cold.” She replied before he could finish his question.

June looked him over and gave a sigh, bending beneath the booth for a second and coming back with a bottle of gin and two glasses. “Lemme get the tonic...and Dez.” She stopped her sentence for a second to think over her words.

“Leave that Canary boy; he doesn’t need you’re trouble.”

“I don’t have the time for that June, and you know it.” Dez scoffed, fixing her sleek, black hair out of her hooped earrings.

“Conary, trust me and look out for this she-witch. She’s so rotten on the inside that she’s going to be rotting on the outside before you know it.”

She returned with the tonic and fixed both of them up with their drinks. “Drink up.”

He looked at it with suspicion, deciding if this sudden meeting would drain him of what money and dignity he had left. He pushed the thought away and allowed himself to indulge once more for the night.

“DeeDee?” The voice came from behind.

We turned and saw a middle-aged woman with black, grey-wisped hair up in a bun come frantically walking to us, her hobble putting her footing in danger. She was wearing greyed-red shirt with yellow embroidered flowers and a turquoise skirt that went down to her feet, a crimson scarf messily wrapped around her neck.

“DeeDee? I-is that you?” She reached an arm out to Dez who was unfazed by the sudden outburst of the woman.

“Sorry Ma’am? Can’t say I know a DeeDee. The name’s Desdemona, Dez for short if you will.”

The woman retracted her shaky hand and looked to the ground in defeat. “Oh, but you look so much like my daughter. She disappeared a few months ago you see, and everything about you is just like her.”

The woman looked up once more, hoping it’d be her daughter there.

“Sorry ma’am, but I can’t help you.” Dez replied and turned back around to the booth.

A sniffle came from the elderly woman who stood there in defeat, hunched over with wavering depression. “Oh...well you’re not her. Her skin was never so pale I suppose.” She paused for a moment. “Wait...”

She reached for Dez once more. “Let me see your eyes, please if there’s anything about her I remember it’s her beautiful eyes. Just let me see.”

Dez hesitantly turned after taking a sip from her glass. She looked straight at the woman with the same effervescent, mahogany eyes she had betrothed unto him only a few moments earlier. The woman’s hand dropped to her side, a tear escaping her eye and falling into the crevices of her wrinkled face.

“Nope...the eyes are all wrong. I’m sorry to bother you.” And with that the woman turned and left the establishment.

“Take a drink, hon. No point in wasting a glass.” Conary took the glass and chugged it down.

This went on for a good hour before Conary was asked to pay. Dez led him out, keeping herself close to him by hugging onto his arm despite the rain. She led them down two blocks before coming to a building similar to every other, its brick setup giving it a rustic look that didn’t match the red curtains that lined the insides of lit up windows. He knew what was happening, but everything around him was spinning in chaos and he couldn’t find a mental barring. They went through the doors and up wooden stairs that were hidden behind a gold-lined and green wall, the receptionist desk missing a body in the stool behind it. Up the rickety stairs they went until the two came to a door, similar to every other. She opened it with a key that hung by her wrist.

The room itself was a fair condition with a bathroom directly to the left of the door and a single king sized bed accompanied by red blankets and pillow covers, colors which did not bode well with the dark blue, crackled walls and the white ceiling. She shut the door behind them and led the stumbling Canary to the bed to sit on. She then went to a side cabinet and pulled out what looked like an Advil container without its label. She popped open the lid and handed over a pill to him which he was hesitant to take.

“Don’t worry; it’s just supposed to sober you up. I know what I’m doing.” She put it in his hand and then made her way to the restroom.

Canary watched as she made her way there and noticed she was limping, an abrasion on the back of her left leg growing like the crack on a window. He rubbed his eyes and saw she had disappeared to the restroom. He examined the pill, rolling it in between his thumb and index finger to give it a quick investigation before he popped it into his mouth, swallowing it despite the lack of water to help it go down.

A crash was heard from the bathroom, the sound of Dez collapsing on the ground. Canary, startled by the sudden sound, precariously went to investigate to see Dez on the ground, her hair veiling her face as she held herself up with her arms, her legs on the ground with a puddle of blood forming beneath them.

“Are you okay?” Canary asked in horror of the sight.

“Canary, don’t worry. Did you take the pill?” She asked, her arms collapsing beneath her and her head hitting the white tiled bathroom ground.

“Y-yeah...I’m...I’m going to call for help. Stay he-“

“NO!” She screamed, her arm lunging for his leg.

She grabbed it, quivering pitifully as the leg cut grew further along her leg, making it almost look like the skin was cracking away.

“Just... I’ll be fine. Just stay here.” She pleaded.

Unsure of how to react, Conary gave a solemn nod and sat by Dez, his inebriated state blocking the common sense to at least examine her.

“Conary...tell me why you’re here.” She asked.

“Why?”

“Keep me distracted while I wait for the blood to stop.”

He thought to himself for a moment, and let out a sigh. “My fiancé left me here.” He began.

Soon after he said that, he began to see the walls melt away into blackness, swathing everything around Conary in pitch darkness; Dez, who was fading away, continued urging him to keep talking. Soon the melted walls twisted and mended into the walls of a familiar home revealing the living room in his parents’ single floor house, beaten carpets and well-designed walls housing shelves of baubles surrounding him. His fiancé sat on a red, microfiber couch, her long red hair up in a ponytail. It was really her once more, her familiar fox face smiling to nothing. He stopped and realized that this was only a dream and that she was yet to tell him of her wishes to move to a land far away with him, only to deceive him by stealing away his money and leaving him in such a town, estranged from his parents and giving him no way to go.

He went to her on his knees, tears streaming down his eyes as the walls around him began to crumble into dust. "You! I trusted you. I loved you. And you take it all away and leave me here in this hellhole. I, I hate you!" he lunged to her, her body dissipating into smoke and leaving the room a void once more. The floor gave way beneath him and Canary began to tumble downwards into nothingness, preparing for the impact.

There was no impact, but rather his mind was washed away to a new scene, one where candles were lit in the air and floating about, dropping hot wax below. Mum was on the vacuumed floor with her face buried in the carpet, her vomit staining the floor whilst a metal flask emptied out its insides as it was lopsided in her hand. She wore a pink suit with black borders and was fit with black heels, an effigy of divinity and high class had it not been for her blind attempts of freedom from her world. But what choice did she have; she wished only to forget and forgive her husband's infidelity. She could love no other man as she love him, but she knew he would never feel the same.

Canary watched his mother suffer, but could not move to comfort her when she slowly got up with a grief stricken face. The walls were turning black once more as she lumbered towards Canary, her eyes melting from her sockets. She grabbed a knife hidden behind her and held the blade to her throat. He tried to run to her, cry for her, pray for her, but he could only watch. She was slowly moving the knife across her throat, mouthing away her insecurities as the blood splattered out in a thick coat of bright paint on the black room.

Canary felt a block in his throat, tears still running down his cheeks, sweat beading on his skin and coming down like the rain outside which beat against the windows like a steady drum. A heat arose in his stomach when all the familiar faces of past grievances overwhelmed him, the

hallucinations destroying his mind and forcing his sweat to run red and stink something vulgar. He felt the heat in his throat grow and, before he realized what was happening, he threw up.

With that he was knocked out of his trance, blinking into focus only to see that his body was stained red and dripping down blood from his pores, all of which collected in a pool of crimson on the bathroom floor.

He looked at Dez who was slowly crawling her way on him so that they could look at each other face to face. She moved her hair out of her face and revealed that her flesh was ripping apart, hardening and cracking like the broken porcelain on a doll. A wide crack went across her face, her lips widened in a wicked smile but wary to show the rotting teeth behind them.

“Sweet child, you look so afraid.” Her voice was hellishly sweet, dripping like butter.

A part of her face fell to reveal black, rotting flesh behind it, the rest of her skin succumbing to quickening decay.

“I had you sweat out all your troubles. That way your skin will last much longer for me. You see, negativity and sadness rots you in the inside, but look here.” She peeled a piece of face flesh away, revealing more of her rotten, disgusting corpse. “I’m already rotting on the inside, so that negativities going to build up in the flesh, destroying it.”

Conary, frozen in horror, finally snapped himself out of the trance she was putting him in and scrambled away, stumbling his way to the door only to find it locked.

“Conary, don’t run. I need your skin. Look at me, I’m rotting away. This DeeDee girl didn’t last very long for me.” She slowly scrambled up, her eyeballs bulging out of her head as the skin around them melted away.

She came to her feet, blood oozing from her body and dripping down from the flesh which was melting away from her legs. The sweater she wore earlier was gone now, revealing rags keeping together flesh that was long gone. The flesh on her fingers was crackling away, her rotting nails, which had been hidden behind the glamor of polish, falling off as blood and puss dripped down from it. Conary pushed himself against the door, trying to find a way out.

She towered over him now, blood of hers dripping off and splashing on Conary, his eyes wide in fear, mutters of pleas escaping his mouth and coming out as a garble of words. The rain outside began to pick up, thunder and lightning drowning out whatever screams he could muster. She grabbed his coat and ripped it off, doing the same with his shirt.

“That pill I gave you is called the Harpie’s Drug. Wonderful stuff, but it’s quite expensive to come by. It’s needed to purge people of the hate in their flesh. You see, any resentment you hold onto will become mine, and I don’t really wish to deal with such tragedies as your own.”

Conary knew then that the pill had slowed his body, leaving him defenseless against her dawdling attack. Once she had his chest bare, she laid her bloodied and skinless fingers upon it, her fingers extending like snakes and penetrating his flesh from the chest. They coiled around, loosening the skin from the muscle and leaving Conary in agonizing pain, his screams falling upon deaf ears as the thunder raged on. She then slowly ripped the flesh apart from the middle of the chest and used one hand to reach for his heart, the slithering fingers going through the

ribcage to his beating muscle. She wrapped her fingers around it, and pulled it carefully from his body, finally giving Conary the sweet release of death.

She held the heart in her hand, knowing this would be sold in order to achieve economic stability for the new life she was about to begin; the hospital is, after all, very generous when it comes to organ “donations”. She slithered to the bathroom and grabbed a box out of beneath the sink and placed the heart inside. She then went to completely separate the skin from Conary’s body, her own body melting away, the last of DeeDee’s flesh to reveal a beastly thing of tar and blood with only eyes and teeth to give any feature aside from its wretched body. She surgically removed the flesh and slipped the skin on herself, filling it out so that she achieved Conary’s original body build. He then examined the skin tear that he’d have to sew back together.

He separated the skinned body parts of his victim and prepared them to be given to the hospital for payment. It was to be a hefty fee to escape Natas-ka, but it’d be worth it.

Besides, his fiancé was waiting for him somewhere. Of course it wouldn’t be her. No, she’s too loving and giving to leave him under such dire circumstances here in this city, but who she is now is another story.