

Creatures of the Night

By Mia Lacey 10J

A young boy clad in plain blue pajamas, sat up for no apparent reason, wondering what woke him. Seeing nothing, he lay back down, pulling the cotton sheets up to his chin. He closed his eyes, trying to go back to sleep on the lumpy mattress. A frosty night breeze blew, gently nudging the clouds aside, revealing a full moon. Cool, white light slipped between the crack in the old lacy curtains and spilled onto the pillow, illuminating the boy's large caramel-coloured eyes that looked out of place on his pale face.

He blinked, adjusting to the light, his expression one of confusion. A haunting melody drifted in through the partly open window, sparkling silver as it twisted and danced in the moonlight and straight into his ear. His face cleared. He sat up, folded the sheet off his body methodically and slipped off the creaking wooden bed.

The room was bare, furnished only with an old bed and a chipped milk crate as a nightstand. The floral wallpaper had a thick layer of dust and the room smelt of mildew. He stood on the unfinished, wooden boards and then, as if beckoned by an invisible finger, he glided towards the door and rested his hand on the metal doorknob. Even the harsh cold could not wake him from his trance. He twisted the doorknob pushing the door open. He continued through a corridor and down the worn, creaking stairs, indifferent to the noise. Once at the back door, he opened it, stepped outside and paused, the gravel and concrete poking his bare feet.

A wintry breeze blew, ruffling his halo of tawny curls. He shivered slightly but continued walking straight, guided by an imaginary string. He walked across the grass, dew clinging to the bottom of his cotton pants, the damp blooming towards his knees. The full moon, unusually large, hung low in the sky, its light flooding the meadow and casting it in a

haunting light. The boy glided closer to the edge of the forest and the haunting melody drifted out from the trees and through the air, sparkling and dancing in the moonlight.

Suddenly, he stopped and looked around in uncertainty and terror, his foot half submerged in a puddle. The melody drifted towards him, and he fell back under its spell. Reaching the forest, he hesitated before stepping into the darkness. The moonlight was blocked by the thick canopy, and the temperature dropped. He walked along the forest floor, damp soil, springy moss and an occasional acorn underfoot, oblivious to the dangers lurking behind the thick trunks. He continued, eventually reaching a part of the forest where the trees transitioned from oak and pine to silvery birch. The boy made his way through the tall, thin trees, trunks no thicker than his wrist. Moonlight pooled on the ground and he stepped into the clearing.

The melody floated up. The boy glanced at his surroundings in terror; he froze when he heard a low growl from behind him. He whipped around to see, sitting on a lichen covered log opposite him, five ethereal creatures, all tall and thin, with long white hair and blue eyes so pale they were almost white. They opened their mouths one by one, and the melody drifted out. It sounded like sad violins and soft pianos. Like the first snow of winter and the countryside stars. Like the silk strings of a harp and the coldness of a moonlit ocean. As it sparkled in the moonlight, the boy, mesmerised, stepped forward, reaching his hand out to touch it.

The melody twirled, distracting the boy. The ethereal creatures slowly shifted into nightmarish lupine beings with dark, matted fur, saliva-coated stained and hungry amber eyes. It was too late when he heard a low growl and turned, his nose touching the wet nose of the largest of them all. It was too late when it blew its hot, putrid breath in his face. It was too late when it dragged its long tongue over its sharp canines. Like a deer in headlights, he was frozen in fear. It was too late to scream when they pounced.

The creatures sat around a pile of broken bones with a bloody halo of tawny curls, the fur around their mouths stained red. They tipped their heads back and howled at the moon, the silver melody slithering down their throats. The five wolf-like creatures shifted back into ethereal beings.

A small white mist emerged from the bloody pile and hovered above it before twisting into a small boy with a halo of curls. All around the clearing, small ghosts stepped out from behind the silvery birches and into moonlight, surrounding the clearing.

The victims of the Creatures of the Night.