

IT WAS A NIGHT

PART FIVE

'Dorothy'

Written by

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EXT. SNOWY HIGHWAY. REYDEL, MICHIGAN. NIGHT.

Snow is falling softly to the ground. The roads are silent, no movement or noise discernible through the thick blanket of white.

EXT. PETROL STATION. CONTINUOUS.

Approaching the petrol station, there is a noticeable difference between the wind and the snow. Here the snow is so thick that the couple of cars parked outside are submerged in it and the wind is so ferocious it's sending anything loose flying off into the night.

It is, in fact, the petrol station's own personal blizzard.

EXT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. CONTINUOUS.

The bright yellow sign of Aunty Ruth's is flickering like a giant S.O.S. beacon against the raging storm. There is also a thick layer of snow slowly creeping higher and higher up the external walls, windows and front door. Inside Aunty Ruth's is completely invisible, hidden behind frosted windows and what remains of the diner's Christmas decorations.

INT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. CONTINUOUS.

DOROTHY (74, a sweetened New York accent), puts down her knitting needles and stands up. Next to her NADIRA (24, Australian) looks upon her in shock. Facing AUSTIN (23, Australian), who is crouched over his summoning circle before the GHOST GIRL, knife in hand, Dorothy speaks:

DOROTHY
That's really not necessary, dear.

On Dorothy's voice, all heads turn to find her standing calmly before them. As Dorothy exits her booth under everyone's watchful eyes, Nadira moves into ANNA's (25, Australian) arms so that Dorothy can squeeze past. Over to one side CARMEN (41, speaks with a noticeable baritone Alabaman accent) and LUCIFER (21, a Michigander) share joint looks of confusion as they watch Dorothy approach the frozen Austin.

Arriving next to Austin, Dorothy places a hand on his shoulder.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
It's not her fault. She really
doesn't mean any harm.

Austin doesn't look entirely convinced.

EXT. THE WOOL FESTIVAL. DAY. *THE PAST.*

Dorothy meanders between stalls, admiring the many coloured wools on display. The festival grounds are full of eager shoppers and knitters, and even the occasional sheep, as they all bustle about in search of food and wool and entertainment.

DOROTHY (V.O.)

A couple of years back there was a wool festival being held, a few counties over from where we are now. On the word of a friend I decided to make the journey. As I'm sure you've all gathered, knitting is something of a hobby of mine.

Dorothy stops at a stall, picking up a skein of very pretty yellow wool.

INT. BUS. LATE AFTERNOON. *THE PAST.*

Tucked away into the corner of the bus Dorothy looks out upon the world as it rushes past. In her lap her fingers move of their own accord, expertly knitting away with the yellow wool. Outside, a light snow begins to fall.

EXT. PETROL STATION. LATE AFTERNOON. *THE PAST.*

As the snow quickens, the BUS DRIVER pulls into the first petrol station that appears. Dorothy watches as the majority of the passengers disembark, making for the warm glow of the nearby diner, a bright yellow sign above the door reading 'AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP'. Dorothy, still knitting, looks up towards the sky through the bus window. It is a blank, white canvas.

INT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. LATE AFTERNOON. *THE PAST.*

Dorothy, now having joined the rest of her travelling companions, sits in a booth and is still knitting, although now she is accompanied by a hearty mug of dark coffee.

DOROTHY (V.O.)

Like you have all experienced tonight, the weather, the snow, was relentless.

(MORE)

DOROTHY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was like it would never end,
that we would be wrapped up in its
thick white blanket for evermore.

Outside the snow hasn't stopped. In fact, it has increased in both ferocity and quantity.

DOROTHY (V.O.)
And that's when things began to
happen.

Above Dorothy's head the lights suddenly flicker, dancing between life and dark. The surrounding patrons all raise their heads to the ceiling while the staff of Aunty Ruth's looked more concerned than curious. Somewhere nearby a door slams, causing a couple of people to jump, and then just as quickly laugh it off among themselves.

Dorothy, unbothered, continues on with her knitting, the recognisable shape of a scarf coming together.

LATER

The lights are still flickering on occasion and the snow is still falling at a relentless pace, and with a large sigh, Dorothy puts down the knitting in her lap. The scarf is complete. Looking around her, Dorothy drums her fingers across the table top. No one is paying her any attention.

Just to her left is the women's bathroom, and while watching a WOMAN exit, Dorothy catches a strange noise, like that of whispering wind that follows the woman through. Keeping an eye on the woman as she returns to her table, Dorothy overhears part of her conversation.

WOMAN
Man, it was creepy in there, and
fucking freezing!

Dorothy's eyes almost seem to sparkle with intrigue. Tucking the scarf into her handbag and then hooking the bag onto her arm, Dorothy pushes up from her booth and approaches the bathroom.

LUCIFER (V.O.)
Excuse me, sorry, but what the
actual--

INT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. NIGHT.

Lucifer clamps his mouth shut as his outburst earns him a mildly threatening look from Carmen.

LUCIFER

Sorry, sorry. But, you guys are
hearing this too, right?

(to Dorothy)

All this creepy shit that's been
happening, you've known all about
it? And you said nothing!

Dorothy nods solemnly in response, looking apologetic.

ANNA

Hey, gamer boy, have a little
patience. Or respect for that
matter. She's telling us, isn't
she. You were the one who
interrupted her story.

It's Lucifer's turn to look ashamed.

AUSTIN (O.S.)

I'm sorry, but if I can interrupt
too.

Everyone turns to face Austin, still crouched before them on
the ground.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

It's just, should we still be
worried about...

Austin gestures towards the ghost, still hovering menacingly
in the centre of the diner. Although she hasn't advanced upon
the group, the swirling storm of debris around her is yet to
slow down. Napkins, broken plates, booth chair foam,
Christmas decorations, all of it creating her own personal
cyclone.

CARMEN

You're the expert, kid. You tell
us.

DOROTHY

No, no. She should calm down soon.
I think...I think she's just a
little excited. Not used to meeting
this many people at once.

Despite her tone, Dorothy doesn't look a hundred percent sure
as she takes a cautious step towards the Ghost Girl. Behind
her, Austin finally rises, stepping back to stand between
Carmen and Nadira. Nadira offers him a small, friendly smile.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM. LATE AFTERNOON. *THE PAST.*

Dorothy gently shuts the door behind her, turning to face the deathly quiet of the women's bathroom. Her breath instantly becomes visible in the air as she takes a cautious step forward.

DOROTHY

Hello?

Up above, a flurry of snow hits the tiny window nestled in the far wall, but besides that there is no reply. Dorothy slowly moves further into the bathroom, noting that both the mirrors and the basins are frosted over. She tries to turn the nearest tap on, but she can't get it to give.

Dorothy continues in her exploration, discovering that one of the stall doors at the far end is open.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

(sing-song)

Hellooo?

BAM!

Suddenly, the stall door slams shut of it's own accord, causing Dorothy's bravado to falter. With quickening pace, Dorothy makes for the bathroom door, pulling at the handle. The door doesn't budge. Dorothy tries again, but pulls back sharply, as if she has been bit. Leaning down, she watches as a thick layer of ice creeps up and over the handle, locking her in.

GHOST GIRL (O.S.)

Heeellloooo.

Whipping around, Dorothy abruptly finds herself nose-to-nose with the Ghost Girl.

INT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. NIGHT.

Dorothy stands before the Ghost Girl, a hesitant expression on her face as she takes another step closer. She narrowly avoids being hit with a flying coffee mug and is forced to raise her hands to her face in defence.

CARMEN

Lady, this is suicide!

Dorothy ignores the shouts behind her. By Carmen's side, Austin has brought out his journal and is furiously making notes as Anna watches on disapprovingly.

On Carmen's other side, Lucifer wipes his sweating hands on his apron, readjusting his grip on his knife. Nadira notices.

NADIRA

Hey.

Lucifer jumps at her voice.

LUCIFER

What?

NADIRA

You okay?

LUCIFER

I'm fine.

Nadira isn't buying it. She extracts herself from Anna's arms and approaches Lucifer.

NAIRA

It's okay. This is scary. It's weird and it's wrong and it's otherworldly.

LUCIFER

Yeah, so?

NADIRA

Nothing. I'm just telling you how I feel. Sometimes that helps. Between you and me, I'm absolutely terrified.

LUCIFER

You don't look it.

NADIRA

Many years of practice.

LUCIFER

Practice?

NADIRA

Seven years of acting classes.

LUCIFER

Oh.

Nadira chuckles gently to herself.

AUSTIN

Shush!

Nadira and Lucifer share a look as they watch Austin scribbling in his book. They break into silent giggles together, part genuine amusement, part fear-induced hysteria.

DOROTHY
Annie!

Anna and Nadira look to one another across the room in shock.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Annie, please. It's me.

Slowly, the Ghost Girl's form appears to become a little more corporeal, a little more recognisable as a girl in a dress. However, her eyes are still a cold, glowing blue and bright white light is coming off the edges of her dress in thick, smoky-like tendrils.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM. LATE AFTERNOON. *THE PAST*.

Dorothy is crouched by the bathroom door, hands covering her face as a chilling and ferocious wind emanating from the centre of the room threatens to flatten her to the ground.

DOROTHY
Stop! Please! You're hurting me.

Very abruptly the wind dies down to nothing. No wind, no sound, no nothing. Slowly, Dorothy picks herself up off the floor, looking around for the Ghost Girl. After she regains her breath and composure, Dorothy steps forward once more.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
May I ask after your name?

Dorothy scans the room for a reply, noticing that something is happening by one of the bathroom sinks. Someone is writing the name *Annie* in the frost upon the mirror.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
(warmly, gently)
Why, that's a very pretty name.

Dorothy takes another step forward, holding her silence. Shortly she asks another question, but this time she is even more cautious than before, her hands already partially raised in anticipation of a negative response.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
And...may I ask how it is you came
to be here, Annie?

Before Dorothy can even reach the end of her sentence the furious wind from before returns, accompanied by an anguished howl. Over by the bathroom sink, Annie's name has disappeared and in it's place the word *MURDER* is being scratched across the frosted mirror, over and over and over, getting more unintelligible each time.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Oh dear, I'm sorry! I didn't mean
to hurt you, it's none of my
business. Please, I won't ask
again.

The words on the mirror disappear.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Perhaps, well, it might help,
maybe...might I see you?

Slowly, the stall door at the end of the line swings open with a long, pitchy squeal. And, as the wind dies down once more, something pale and wispy floats out into the centre of the room. A young girl, wearing what once would have been a bright yellow sun dress. Despite her insubstantial appearance, the skin around her neck is clearly discoloured, black, blue and a deep purple. The tips of her fingers are also frostbitten, lightly covered in a skin of ice and purple.

Dorothy takes a gentle step forward.

The Ghost Girl doesn't retreat. A little closer the expression on her face is visible a something torn between bitter sadness and an insatiable fury.

Dorothy takes another step forward.

The Ghost Girl floats back slightly.

Looking around, Dorothy decides to sit down. As she attempts to bundle herself and her bag into something resembling comfort the ice clears from beneath and around her. Across from her the Ghost Girl also lowers herself into a cross-legged position, eyeing Dorothy.

Ignoring the Ghost Girl, Dorothy brings out her knitted scarf.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Seems appropriate to have knitted a
scarf, considering what a mighty
storm we have going on today. I
imagine that was your doing, little
one?

The Ghost Girl doesn't move or make any kind of reply. Through the tiny window up above, the snow lessens slightly.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
I was intending this as a Christmas
present for my daughter. Albeit
originally planned as a belated
gift, but being stuck here helped
me finish it. Thank-you.

Finally looking up, Dorothy takes in the appearance of the Ghost Girl.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
You must be cold.

Before Dorothy, the Ghost Girl's form stutters slightly.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
I wonder...

Dorothy considers the scarf in her hands. The yellow wool almost identical to the faded yellow of the Ghost Girl's dress.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Perhaps there is a worthier
receiver? Here, you take it.

The Ghost Girl shifts backwards slightly at Dorothy's initial approach before slowly coming forward. Reaching a tentative hand towards the scarf, when her fingers connect with the wool a light dusting of frost spreads across the scarf and her hand goes through. Holding steady, Dorothy keeps the scarf aloft.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Go on, try again.

Screwing her face up, the Ghost Girl reaches out once more and this time her hand doesn't pass through. Retreating, the Ghost Girl studies the object in her hands with a childlike wonder. Rising up from the floor, Dorothy watches as the Ghost Girl wraps the scarf around her neck, concealing the horrible marks. Hesitantly, the Ghost Girl turns to look at herself in the nearby mirror, all of them now defrosted. In fact, everything is slowly defrosting and starting to drip gently.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Ah, see, it would seem it was made
for you.

The Ghost Girl returns to face Dorothy, producing a shy but thankful smile.

All of a sudden, one of the taps starts spewing water, startling Dorothy who jumps and turns towards the source of the noise. When she turns back, the Ghost Girl is gone. Outside, the snow has stopped.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)

Okay, everyone. Reckon it's safe enough to hit the road again.

Dorothy starts walking towards the bathroom door.

AUSTIN (V.O.)

Mrs! Mrs! Watch out!

Confused by the voice, Dorothy blinks and...

INT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. NIGHT.

Dorothy opens her eyes. She is now directly in the centre of the whirling storm of diner debris. Looming above her, in all her fury and in no way calmed, is the Ghost Girl, and her two glowing blue eyes are as cold and cruel as ever.

THE END OF PART FIVE...