

THE MANSION THAT BREATHES

Written by

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EXT./INT. HIGHWAY IN AUSTRALIA - CAR - DAY

Sun rays cast a brilliant, golden light across a grassy field and concrete roads. Mountains scattered and various cars RUSH by in the distance.

The car motor HUMS as CHARLOTTE, 18, meek, TAPS the keys on her laptop in the backseat.

Next to Charlotte, DANNY, 7, jumpy, bounces as he looks out car window. A flashlight with a turtle-head wiggles in his hands.

ON CHARLOTTE'S LAPTOP SCREEN:

"Charlotte Andree / 3.26.19

Introduction Letter to College

I want to study for a degree in Criminal Justice because _"

BACK TO SCENE

Danny flings his arms as the flashlight flies out of his hands and onto the floor with a THUD.

Charlotte grabs the flashlight and hands it to Danny. Danny snatches it from her hands and growls.

DANNY

Leave my stuff alone.

CHARLOTTE

I'm just watching out for you.

CANDACE, 42, heavy make-up, turns her head around the front passenger seat.

CANDACE

Charlotte, that's nice of you, but if your brother doesn't want to be bothered, then don't bother him.

CHARLOTTE

I was just helping hi - -

CANDACE

Charlotte, just--don't. We do not need a headache on this trip, so stop.

DR. JOHNSON, 45, tense, grips the steering wheel in the driver seat. The leather CRINKLES. He TAPS his index finger.

DR. JOHNSON
She's only trying to help, hun.

CANDACE
I know, but they fight like this
everyday, John. I've had it up to
here.

Candace whips her hand above her head as it THUMPS against
the ceiling of the car.

DR. JOHNSON
Kids, behave. My meeting with Dr.
Steve needs to go smoothly, so no
more fighting.

Charlotte sighs as her lip quivers. Her fingers TAP at the
laptop keys.

ON CHARLOTTE'S LAPTOP SCREEN:

"I want to study for a degree in Criminal Justice because
I'M USELESS. WEAK. Why bother??_"

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. THE MANSION - ENTRANCE - DAY

A skyscraper-like wall of dark-red bricks stands a few feet
from Dr. Johnson's car. Gargoyles with demonic faces scatter
along the steep roof.

An outdoor, gated entrance that reads "GARDEN" neighbors the
wall.

Dr. Johnson SHIFTS the car gear.

Danny flings himself out through the car door and leaps to
the front of the mansion.

DANNY
We're here! Look how cool this
place is! I'm going to explore
everything!

Dr. Johnson and Candace carry their luggage to the door
entrance.

DR. JOHNSON
Hurry up you two.

Danny rushes to the gate.

Charlotte SLAMS her car door.

CHARLOTTE

Danny!

Charlotte runs to the gate, then she freezes.

Through the bars of the gate, a long, shadowy pathway expands to a dark corner.

Charlotte trembles her hand to the gate handle and pulls it open with a CREAK.

COREY, 18, jock, peeks his head out from behind the car. He trains his gaze on Charlotte.

EXT. GARDEN - Day

Walls of dark windows stretch along a narrow, concrete path. Tall bushes SWISH around Charlotte. She treads with steady feet. A bright light glows ahead.

THE CREATURE, humanoid with scaly skin, gray-colored with bloodshot eyes, twitches on a wall through a window behind Charlotte. Its gaze on her.

Leaves CRUNCH under Charlotte's foot. The golden light of Charlotte's flashlight swerves.

Danny sits on a expansive fountain that displays a demon, human hybrid with horns as it SPLASHES water out of its snout like a geyser.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

What are you doing? You don't just run off, especially in a place like this.

Danny leaps off the fountain as Charlottes grabs his wrist.

DANNY

Leave me alone! Why do you always bother me?

CHARLOTTE

Because I care.

Charlotte bumps into DR. STEVE, 49, tall with a scruffy beard. He bends to her level.

DR. STEVE

You're late for dinner you two.
Best get inside before night falls
and the demons come out to play.

Charlotte shivers as she pulls Danny to her side.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A crimson flame dances inside a marble fireplace, which neighbors walls that stretch to a tall ceiling. A long table stretches from wall to wall.

Dr. Johnson, Candace, Dr. Steve, and Danny sit at the table with plates of food in front of them.

Charlotte sits next to Candace.

DR. STEVE
Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER, 68, careful, in a suit-and-tie, places a dish of steamy casserole in front of Charlotte. She smiles, stabs a piece, then eats it.

CHARLOTTE
Thank you, Christopher.

As Christopher walks away, Danny leaps out of his seat.

DANNY
I have to use the bathroom!

DR. STEVE
The bathroom is down the foyer hall, then make a sharp left.

Dr. Johnson glares at Danny.

DR. STEVE (CONT'D)
So, Charlotte. I've heard that you are going to college this year. What are you studying?

CHARLOTTE
Um... criminal justice... I'll be right back. I'll go check on my brother.

INT. HALLWAY TO BATHROOM - DAY

An old-fashioned wallpaper decorates the tall walls. Charlotte's feet THUMP along a soft carpet. She freezes and squints towards a blurry humanoid object in front of her.

Charlotte stumbles towards the wall. She then collapses to the floor.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

A rat skitters across a dirty, concrete floor. Empty, broken wooden shelves surround Charlotte. Dead silence.

CHARLOTTE

What happened? Where... ? Mom? Dad?
Danny? Corey?

Charlotte stumbles to her feet.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

A long hall of faint darkness stretches with no windows. Charlotte's foot CREAKS against the wooden floor.

A golden light dances around the corner in front of her.

Charlotte shuffles her feet across the floor. She peeks around the wall.

A lantern swings in Christopher's trembling hand. Its light sways along the shadowy walls, ceiling, and floor.

CHARLOTTE

Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, Miss Charlotte, thank goodness
you're alright. I haven't located
anyone since the blackout.

CHARLOTTE

Wait, you experienced the blackout,
too?

CHRISTOPHER

Follow me, Miss Charlotte. I will
help you find your family, then you
may leave this place at once.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CLOSET - NIGHT

Charlotte and Christopher walk along the hall. They freeze at an open doorway filled with darkness.

CHRISTOPHER

Wait here, Miss Charlotte. I'll go
investigate.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Charlotte follows Christopher into a dark room. The lantern light reveals walls of clothes.

Charlotte's foot CRACKS against a key on the floor. Charlotte grabs it and examines its spherical end.

A CRUNCH rolls as Charlotte whips her head up to the end of the room.

Christopher stumbles to his knees, then he falls backwards with The Creature's arms and legs wrapped around his twisted head like a koala.

Charlotte gasps and steps back.

The Creature unravels its arms and legs. It stands on its feet with faint THUMPS. It glares towards Charlotte with its reddish eyes. It sneaks towards her.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CLOSET - NIGHT

Charlotte flings through the doorway, then SLAMS the door. She turns the lock with a CLICK.

The door BANGS as Charlotte rushes towards the other wall. She whips her hand with the key up to her side.

Charlotte runs towards a door. She twists at the knob with a RATTLE. She bends to the keyhole to see it bear a spherical shape.

Charlotte pulls out the key from her pocket. She twists the key into the keyhole with a CLICK and pulls the door open.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

A chandelier sparkles near the tall ceiling with a few candles scattered along the walls and round tables. Wide shelves with thick books line around a checkered-tile floor.

In the middle, a circle of computers surround a pillar that stretches to the ceiling. A second floor covers the perimeter with a corner that resides a door labeled, "OFFICE."

Charlotte locks the door, then she rushes to the computers and TAPS on the keys. A yard stick resides near the keyboard as she slides it towards her.

CHARLOTTE

The mouse is still warm...

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN:

"Rabies DNA mutation experiment results: SUCCESSFULLY ALTERS
AND STRENGTHENS HUMAN AND ANIMAL BEHAVIOR."

BACK TO SCENE

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Is... is that what that
thing is? Why does my father work
with this maniac?

A hand enwraps Charlotte's shoulder. She twists her body fast
like a bullet as she snatches the yard stick.

Corey whips his hand back.

COREY

Charlotte! Hey, it's just me. It's
okay.

Charlotte smiles and embraces Corey with a bear-hug.

COREY (CONT'D)

Were you, uh, going to use that on
me?

Charlotte glances to the yard stick on the table.

CHARLOTTE

Um... I'm sorry, I thought you
were... What're you doing here?

COREY

Well, I couldn't bear to not see
you for a week, so I followed your
Dad.

Charlotte glares at Corey as she folds her arms.

COREY (CONT'D)

I know that sounds stalkish. I'm
sorry. I just wanted to make sure
you're safe.

CHARLOTTE

I'm fine, Corey. Thank you, though.

COREY

You sure about that? You seemed
pretty jumpy a second ago.

CHARLOTTE

I'm just... I'm under a lot of emotional stress right now.

COREY

Look. I checked out the computers, and there's crazy shit on there. You need to get outta here.

CHARLOTTE

I will once I find my family.

The door BANGS as the wood CRACKS. The Creature whips its twitchy hand to the door knob.

COREY

Run, Charlotte! I'll hold it off!

Charlotte whips out the yard stick.

As The Creature storms through the door with a SNAP, Charlotte CRACKS it over the head with the yard stick.

The Creature SCREECHES as blood drizzles down its temple.

COREY (CONT'D)

Damn, Charlotte... Go. Find your family. I'll take it from here.

CHARLOTTE

But - -

COREY

Go!

Corey snatches a piece of the broken yard stick and whistles to The Creature. The Creature sprints after Corey.

Charlotte sprints up a staircase.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

An office desk sits in the middle of the room with papers stacked in a neat fashion by a lit lamp. On the right of the desk is a large window, which showcases the dark, cloudy sky.

Charlotte BARGES through the door. Her head whips back and forth. She rushes behind the office desk. She pulls drawers out left and right with SLAMS and SHUFFLES.

CHARLOTTE

There's gotta be something here.

One drawer jams with a THUD. Charlotte squints her eyes as something silvery shines through the open crack.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Dammit.

Charlotte grips the handle and tugs with a jerk. The drawer CRASHES out. Inside, a shiny, metallic case resides. Charlotte pulls it out and places it on the desk.

The word "rwtn" etched in the bottom-right corner of the case. She runs her fingers over the glossy keypads.

As Charlotte TYPES the code, the case CLICKS open. Inside rests a revolver. Charlotte lifts it out. Her hand trembles under the gun's grip before her fingers squeeze around it.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Mom. Dad. Danny. Corey. I'm coming
to save you.

Charlotte kneels in front of a dark, large hole in the floor. Light shines through. She takes a deep breath, then slides through it.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Charlotte falls through the ceiling as she twists her body away from a sharp pipe. She SLAMS against a concrete floor.

Hallway of shiny equipment scatter along the floor on top of metallic tables. DRIPS echo across the black walls of bricks. Ceiling panels cast light along the reflective tables.

Five human-sized, fluid-filled pods line against a wall at the end of the room. Candace and Dr. Steve float inside them.

CHARLOTTE

Oh my god.

Danny rushes out from behind a table. He runs towards Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Danny!

The Creature gazes at Danny from the ceiling as it crawls along it. It leaps at Danny.

Charlotte freezes. She throws herself towards Danny, hugs him in front of her, and turns her back to The Creature.

Charlotte flies forward with Danny in her arms and slams against the ground as The Creature slashes its bony fingers across her back.

Charlotte winces. Her arms squeeze Danny tight like a bear as blood pours down her back.

Danny screams and hugs Charlotte.

DANNY

I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

CHARLOTTE

Shh. Shh. It's... it's okay. I got you. I won't let it hurt you.

The Creature sneaks behind Charlotte with its eerie gaze. It freezes and stands above Charlotte with blood-dripping fingers.

Dr. Johnson walks behind The Creature with a remote in his hand.

DR. JOHNSON

I didn't expect you to be so brave, Charlotte. Wow. Perhaps you can even work for me.

Dr. Johnson shoves his foot between Charlotte as Danny loses his grip on her. Dr. Johnson rips Danny up to his feet, then points the gun to his stomach.

Corey bursts through the shadows and rushes to Dr. Johnson.

COREY

You bastard!

Dr. Johnson presses the remote button. The Creature grabs Corey by the arms as it MUNCHES into his shoulder.

Charlotte stumbles to her feet. She pulls out the revolver with a trembling hand.

DR. JOHNSON

You... you don't have the guts, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

(whimpering)

Why?

DR. JOHNSON

Dr. Steve wanted to buy off my
research for a mutation of rabies
DNA. Years of work for a few bucks?

Dr. Johnson chuckles and shoves the pistol to Danny's stomach
harder. Danny whimpers.

DR JOHNSON

I mean this remote is what's making
my creation feast on your fool of a
boyfriend over there.

Corey screams as he twists around with The Creature.

DR. JOHNSON

It controls the rabies virus in its
body with just a touch of a button.
Right now, it's flooding its veins.

Dr. Johnson lifts the remote. His thumb turns pale white as
it squeezes against a button.

Charlotte points the revolver at Dr. Johnson.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Aren't you tired of being harassed?
I took care of you. Your mother,
brother, and boyfriend won't
anymore.

Charlotte pulls the trigger and SHOOTS The Creature in the
head. It collapses with a GURGLE.

Dr. Johnson freezes and stares at Charlotte. His arms fall to
his sides.

Danny pushes himself off Dr. Johnson and rushes to Charlotte.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Charlotte.

Charlotte pulls the trigger as the gunshot ECHOES.

EXT. ENTRANCE - DAY

Crickets sing as the sunlight shies through the trees.

Charlotte and Corey wobble out the door with arms around
their shoulders. In Charlotte's other arm, Danny hugs
Charlotte's neck. They limp to Dr. Johnson's car.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

STATIC sparks. Glass litters the floor as five shattered pods line against the wall. A staircase leading upstairs rest in the corner that end at an iron door.

DR. JOHNSON, 50, sulky-eyed and shivery, sits on the floor against a table. His ankle shackled to a pipe.

The iron door CREAKS and SLAMS.

Dr. Johnson whimpers and trembles as if let out in the snow for hours. His eyes widen as a humanoid shadow engulfs him.

CHARLOTTE, 22, donning longer hair, a trench coat, and a gun holster, steps in front of Dr. Johnson and leans down to his level.

CHARLOTTE

Hi, Dad. Look. I made detective.
Surprised?

Charlotte whips a police badge to Dr. Johnson's face.

DR. JOHNSON

Please, Charlotte. Don't shoot me.
Please.

CHARLOTTE

I won't. You're my Dad. I love you
so much.

Charlotte smiles and kisses Dr. Johnson on the cheek. She reaches into her coat.

Dr. Johnson cries and wraps himself around the leg of the table.

Charlotte pulls out a bag of food and places it in front of Dr. Johnson. She stands upright and walks to the stairs.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

But I'm not like you. I'm not a
monster. Nor am I coward. I'm fear
itself. I conquered it, and I've
become it.

Dr. Johnson breathes heavy.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

And if I see you in town, or if you
come after us again, I will find
you. See you next week, Dad.

Dr. Johnson shakes with wide eyes as Charlotte LAUGHS and SLAMS the iron door.