Youth Story

Truth or Dare

By Taylan McCloud

I used to take the things I had and loved for granted. Maybe that’s because I never thought I could lose them. My dog, the house I grew up in, grandparents, friends.

But that all changed the day I almost lost my life.

“Rory, I changed my mind. I don’t want you to do that dare! I’ll make another one!” I shouted from too far away. Maybe if I had been closer things would have been different, but the past is in the past… right? “I can’t back out just because you’re too scared, Laura!” Rory yelled back, “Plus I told Marius what I am doing, and he bet me ten bucks I wouldn’t do it!” She added. I turned around and saw him watching. I smiled and said hi, and he just winked back. I rolled my eyes and turned back around to Rory who was already starting to open the door. It slowly swung open with a spooky *creeeaaakkk*. “Rory, I was just joking! I don't want you to step inside of Creeper’s Cabin. Did you forget about the ghost of the woman that was murdered here?”

“Ghosts aren’t real. Don’t be silly.” That's when it all unraveled. Something caught my eye for a split second. Inside the cabin, I saw a white, eerie, glow through a dusty window framed by tattered curtains that were blowing in a breeze. “Rory, get out!” I squealed as she stepped through the door. She looked back with concern written on her face. Before she could get away, something or some*one,* dragged her inside. A loud *creeeaaakkk* and gust of wind quickly slammed the door behind her.

Marius ran over to my side. “What just happened?”, he asked, with dread on his face. All I could do was shake my head. “I-I didn’t know anything would actually happen! I didn’t want her to be k-kidnapped.” I stammered through sobs. “It’s not your fault, Laura. You didn’t…” he trailed off. “What?” I urged when he kept staring at the house. “What… *is that?!”* I brought my gaze to where he was looking. A little scream slipped past my lips. Inside the house, through another broken window, we saw a pale-gray, figure, bony with a sunken face and raven black hair flowing behind her as she swayed. Her white dress seemed to glow but splattered down the front was crimson blood and Rory was draped over her shoulder.

“Breathe, *breathe.*” Marius tried to mollify but it didn't work. “I could’ve helped her; I could’ve run and grabbed her.” I sobbed. “You couldn’t have done anything; you were too far away.” Marius placed his hands on my shoulders and met my eyes. “Everything will be okay. But right now, we have to work on saving Rory.” He was right. I pulled myself together and tried to think clearly. That’s when it hit me. The cops would never believe us, we’d have to take matters into our own hands. “We have to go in there and save her ourselves,” I whispered under my breath. “What did you say?” Marius asked, surprised. “We have to go into Creeper’s Cabin and save Rory from that… ghost.” The word felt so weird coming out of my mouth. “If she is still alive, she could be hurt so we have to get her.”

We walked up to the cabin and Marius stepped onto the porch first then gave me his hand. The ground gave out beneath my right foot, but he quickly lifted me out. “Dry rotted wood.” He said as I rolled my ankle around and stood back up. “Let’s go,” I said with deep dread. Marius opened the door and walked in. Everything seemed ancient. If you looked hard enough you could still see the beauty but knowing what was going on made it as scary as the neighborhood kids had known, it to be for over a decade. “We last saw her on the top floor so...” I pointed to a staircase in the far corner of the house. We creeped over but by the time we got to the first step, there was a blood-curdling scream from above… Rory’s scream. Tears pricked my eyes, but I wiped them away as we raced to the top floor.

I reached the top and what I saw made my blood run cold. “What?” Marius asked from behind me. I stepped to the side so that he could come closer. He gasped. Blood sat in pools, and beside them was a note, “*Catch me if you dare.”*

There was a blood trail leading to a door that stood open a crack. “I think she’s there,” I said, shaking with every word. Rory screamed again. “We have to go,” Marius said more calmly than I expected. My stomach churned and my hands trembled. I reached out for Marius’s hand and held tight as we opened the door.

“WHERE IS RORY!” I screamed as we burst into the room. Laughter boomed all around me. Standing right in front of us was…Rory, who was very much alive and well! “You fell for it!” She giggled as I ran to hug her. “Wait, what are you talking about? Was this a joke?” I demanded. They all nodded their heads. “So, who are you?” I pointed to the ghost, and she ripped off her mask. It was Marius’s sister, Linh. My face burned red with anger and embarrassment. But then… I laughed and they joined in. My best friend was okay! Everything was okay, for now… then every flashlight that they brought with them flickered out and then turned off. We all screamed but I recovered myself the quickest. “*Rory,* don’t you think this is overkill,” I asked with no reply. “Rory?”

“That wasn’t us…” she replied shakily. The lights turned back on for us to find Marius gone and in his place a bloody knife and a note saying, “*Didn’t your parents ever tell you that you shouldn’t play truth or dare?”*