

The Library

The fire was crackling, the smell of smoke hung in the nice clear air; red, orange, mixed with a touch of yellow flickered against the eight girls' faces. Each girl beamed as they constructed their smores. It was a traditional campfire. A traditional slumber party. They had completed the truth or dare, the talks about crushes, the kiss marry kill, and so forth. The one thing they had left out was the ghost stories. One girl stood up; she revealed a large flashlight, with a devilish grin upon her face.

"You want to hear a story?" The girl proclaimed.

The seven other girls agreed; jittery in anticipation of what was to come. She began, the flashlight tucked beneath her chin; her face luminous in the dark as the embers of the fire died down.

"Imagine a rundown library..."

Maroon wallpaper peeling, creaky wood floors, worn rugs underneath various shelves; dust collecting on numerous books, and lamps with burned out lightbulbs, leaving a yellow glow. The librarian was short and stout, with a kind smile, and silver gray hair. She was very orderly and her specialty was teaching young children how to read; she thoroughly enjoyed the thrill of a young child finally understanding the words. However, she did not know how to say no. Lots of people took advantage of her, taking multiple books and never returning them. Leaving her to spend more than she could afford on replacement books. After struggling for years just trying to keep her establishment afloat, the poor librarian clearly could not take the stress anymore. Her caring nature slowly morphed into anger. She was tired of being manipulated time and time again. One night, she was just done, she took out one of her biggest books; *War and Peace* and she slapped herself in the face three times. She was dead.

The library was soon deserted. Only hollow memories of what had been, remained. Until someone new came along. She was young and bright. Tall and slender with piercing icy blue eyes. She scoped out the library, inspecting every inch of every surface. Her eyebrows raised at the wooden carvings in wonder, an inquisitive expression lingering on her face. Then she took a deep breath, stood tall, and confidently said she would buy the library. Despite the abundant amount of questions she asked she failed to get a fairly crucial piece of information. Who knows, maybe if she had been made aware of the past, she could have avoided what was to come. The minute the paperwork was filled

out the new librarian set to work. Making decisions that impacted the day to day business of a private library. She changed everything from the wallpaper to the shelves. The only thing that endured was the wooden carvings. A year flew by and business was doing pretty well. Although, whenever the work day was over and she was closing up the library, weird things happened. The strange occurrences only got worse as the library kept adapting. She would put a new lamp on a table and the next morning the new lightbulb she had put in would have been shattered. Then, it got worse. New book selections were going missing. At first she just assumed it was a customers' doing, but when she found the exact series in a closet; she knew it was something more. It was as if someone was sabotaging her business, either by stealing the new things she changed, or putting things the way they were originally.

One night, before she closed the library; she heard almost a whooshing sound, her head swerved, her eyes bulged, terror pulsed through her veins. She heard rustling on a nearby shelf; the book *War and Peace* levitating in thin air. She froze, she was able to let out one shrill, penetrating scream before the book hit her in the face; only once.

At that exact moment one of the teenage boys who never returned his books, walked into the still open library. His blood ran cold, one of his overdue books fell to the ground. The ghostly librarian didn't stop there, she rushed to the doors, locking the boy in. She grabbed the overdue book he had dropped. She bashed him over the head with it; about three times. Granted it wasn't *War and Peace* but it was, *Life and Fate*. The younger librarian started to regain consciousness, wiping off the blood smeared on her face. The older librarian faced her, feeling remorse. The older librarian decided to explain why she felt the need to do everything. She found a pen and paper and wrote her rationale. She had done it to preserve her beloved library from transforming into something she hadn't taken any part in. Her legacy with the library was basically erased with every new shelf and new rug. She killed the boy to get revenge on all the pain he had caused her, driving her into madness; making her resort to this kind of violence in the first place. She wrote it all and she put it on the front desk. She watched anxiously. The younger librarian read, checking her surroundings every few seconds. When she was finished she got up and she took one of her fancy new lamps off the table, she went into a storage closet and got out one of the previous ones. The older librarian's work was done.

The flashlight clicked off, all the girls' faces stricken with fear.