

Shadow in The Attic

By : Matthew Bissonette

A man on a train learns that the guy in the seat beside him as his wife locked in the attic.



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by Matthew Bissonnette

So the old man in the seat next to me finally said bluntly, "My wife, I love her dearly, but I have her locked up in the attic."

I was on a passenger train that night the old man told me his odd tale. I boarded in Ottawa and was bound for Montreal, it was a trip I had made countless times. I, an accountant in his mid thirties, was on my way to a family gathering for the Christmas holidays that cold December. I had taken a seat by the window and had not noticed when the frail looking old gaunt fellow in the black suit had taken the seat next to me. As the train rolled out of Ottawa, the old man started to talk. Not wanting to be impolite, I engaged in dialogue with him. He said his name was William Martin, and was returning home after attending the funeral of a friend from the war. At some point in the conversation he said that he had his wife locked up in the attic.

I did not think he was serious and jokingly asked, "and why do you have her locked up in the attic?"

The old man looked past me and out the window. The darkened countryside, secluded valleys under a full moon, rolled past as he then said, "it is for her own good. She might hurt somebody if I let her out."

I shrugged and replied, "you make your wife sound like a monster."

Then the old man seemed to grow distant, his eyes betrayed some great pain that tormented this old fellow; he seemed both scared and tired. He then asked, "would you like to hear the story, but my wife I mean?"

I nodded. "Sure."

He then settled back into his seat and told his story as I listened.

"Let me begin with that she was not always like she is now. Before the change took over, she was one of the most beautiful, gracious women I had ever known. Funny how in the beginning I thought she never would have me. After the war, with some shrapnel in my leg, I worked for a lawn care company. I would push a lawnmower as I cut the grass for some of the large estates on the outskirts of Montreal. The summer of 51, I

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was still in my twenties and was cutting the lawn for a wealthy family, the Morin clan. As I push my mower across the lawn as I became aware that a young woman was watching me from the second floor balcony of the Morin home. She seemed delicate, petite and had such sensitive eyes. Her name was Samantha Morin, the young daughter of Charles Morin. About my age, but from a different world. I was from a poor home, but she came from money. But that day, the way she looked at me, I'll never forget it. It was not for another month until I built up the nerve to talk to her. But I did, and soon we were in love. I mean she could have anybody, but she wants me.

I said, "sounds like you two loved each other from the beginning."

William frowned. "At first we hid it from her father, but soon he finds out. I thought he would be furious, but instead says he wants to speak to me alone. He says that if I want to marry Samantha, then I would have to know what that would entail. He asks me how much I love his daughter, and would I still love her if she changed. I told him yes then he tells me of the Morin curse. The Morin family came from old France, they told a story about how a early matriarch of the family had been seduced by a demon and bore it a child. The family said that the child seemed normal for the first thirty years, but as he got older he changed; became inhuman."

I listened fascinated, I thought the old timer might be touched in the head and suffer from some madness; but stories of the strange and unusual always was one of my fancies.

He went on. "This Morin boy, they said he became like a demon. Horns, claws, even a tail. And they said he was dangerous, and would kill if not confined to a room. I did not know why Charles was telling me this, I thought maybe he was trying to scare me away. He then tells me that ever since this event, occasionally a Morin child would be born with a mark. And if they have a mark, then they become something other than human as they get on in years. He says that Samantha had been born with the mark. He says I can marry his daughter, but when the change happens, that I would have to protect her for the rest of my life."

I asked, "so you agreed then?"

William seemed saddened. "Yes. I married Samantha, but on our wedding night, she shows me it. Until then I thought Mr. Morin's story was all rubbish, then Samantha showed me a patch of skin on her stomach. At first I thought it was a bruise, but on closer inspection it looked like a patch of scales on her stomach. She began to cry, but I held her and told her that I would stay with her no matter what happened. I meant it."

I looked at William. "What happened to Samantha?"

William, a single tear forming in his eye, explained. "For the first few years it was great. We lived in a large home, but as time went on she began to change. When I first met her she was so kind, yet over the years she became bitter, even hateful. And that patch of skin on her stomach, it grew over time. Samantha, she was changing, and as time went on the change got faster. Eventually, after she changed so much, I locked her up in the attic of our home. She has been there till this day."

I pretended to be consoling, but surely his story was the ramblings of some lunatic. I said, "well, I guess you must love her."

William sighed. "I don't have much time left. I don't know what will become of her."

I looked away from him and out the window. I said, "well, it will all sort itself out."

"You don't believe me," William asked.

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I replied, "Your story does sound somewhat farfetched."

"Would you like to see her?"

I looked at him just as we entered Montreal.

After me and the old man got off the train in downtown Montreal, we took a cab and drove out to one of the wealthier suburbs spread out around the city. It was almost midnight when the cab came to a stop in front of the Morin estate.

It was a large, Victorian house behind a long, unkempt yard. It was snowing as we walked across the lawn to the house. All the lights in the house were off, yet for a small light coming from an attic window, a barred attic window.

"Is she up there," I asked.

We arrived at the front door and said as he unlocked it, "she does not like the dark."

Inside it seemed that this home was also unkempt. Clothes strewn about everywhere, cats loitering about, trash discarded on the ground. But as he turned on the lights some loud banging came from upstairs.

William said loudly, "I am home dear."

The banging stopped and he led me through the house, up some stairs and we came to a door at the end of the hall. It was a large, heavy door with a slot in it which was shut. William walked ahead of me and stood next to the door. He slid open the slot in the door and said, "go ahead, take a look."

I nervously walked up to the door and looked through the slot. Beyond was a small room, a made bed as well as a table and chair. A light shined down from the ceiling, but in the shadows, in the corner of the room was something. A human-like silhouette crouching in the corner making vaguely woman-like panting sounds. I strained my eyes to get a better look when it then bolted out from the shadows and ran right at the door.

Upon seeing it briefly, barely a second, I fell to the ground yelling. I saw something that looked like a woman, but with crimson red, scaly skin. All I remember now were those gnashing claws and teeth, and yellow eyes that glowed. As I lay upon the ground, something was furiously trying to break down the door.

As I got to my feet, William said, "she won't break down the door. Now please, leave."

Needing no further encouragement, I left that house and would never return to anywhere near that home or attic again. Surely it is still up there, teeth and claws; tenderly watched after by a loving old man.

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