

The Masked Terror

Elizabeth was a fine young woman, expressing beauty to the utmost extent, not only physically, but from within, through her kind nature. She was the talk of the town, having many men who wanted to have her as their own. Elizabeth was shy and quiet, so she was never really looking for a relationship, and didn't have many friends, except for one; Mary was the opposite of Elizabeth, always going out on the town, trying to find the man of her dreams. One night while hanging out at Elizabeth's, Mary would mention a masquerade party that she had heard about earlier that day and thought this was a perfect opportunity to go out and do something fun with her best friend. Mary would cry out, "C'mon Beth! I know you don't normally like going out due to the swarm of men, but everyone will be wearing masks at this party, so no one will even recognize you! It'll be fun to go out together for once and this is the perfect opportunity! Please!?" After a moment of silence and a glare from Elizabeth, she finally responds, "You sure no one will know who I am?" After hearing that, Mary took that as a yes, and immediately grabbed Elizabeth's wrist, and dragged her into the closet and got ready for the party.

Not even through the door yet, Elizabeth and Mary are getting looks from every direction. Mary was in a dark blue, velvet, long, slim dress, paired with black flats, accompanied with a dark swan like mask, while Elizabeth was in a fire red, loose, short, silk dress, paired with bright red high heels, accompanied with a red phoenix like mask. As they get into the party, men begin to swarm around Mary, giving her the attention that Elizabeth would get on a normal day. "I'm going to get a drink from the bar," Elizabeth shouts to Mary over the combined party noises

of loud music and people chatting. "Are you sure you will be alright on your own," Mary asks, still surrounded by men. "Yeah, I'll be fine. Just come join me when you are ready," Elizabeth responds and starts toward the bar. As she makes her way through the crowd, Elizabeth thinks about how nice it is that she isn't being stopped every second to be complimented; it was like if she was a ghost, and she was enjoying being invisible, but it wouldn't last for long. As she arrived at the bar, Elizabeth would order her usual, "One vodka martini," she shouted to the bartender. "I'll get what she's having, but can I get a straw in mine; that's my favorite drink," a large mystery man says as he approaches Elizabeth. "Every other person here has ordered beer after beer, so it's nice to see someone who shares my same unique taste," the man continues. Normally, Elizabeth would be bothered by a man coming up and talking to her, but for some reason, she was okay with this man's company; maybe it's because of the strange mask he wore, which covered his entire face, with the only visible distinguishing feature being his big, hazel eyes. "Oh, I can't take all the credit; my best friend, Mary, is actually the one who introduced me to this drink. She's actually also the reason I am even here tonight," Elizabeth rambled. As their drinks arrived, the man would propose a toast, "To Mary, for sharing her fabulous taste in drinks with you and allowing for the opportunity for us to meet tonight." After sharing a few drinks, Elizabeth finally asks the man about his unique mask, "By the way, I love your mask, where did you get it?" "Oh, this old thing, I've had it forever, it's something that I made a long time ago, it's actually pretty sentimental," the man responds softly. As the night went on, Elizabeth began to realize that she might have met the perfect man; "He's kind, a good chat, definitely not like the men I typically encounter," Elizabeth thinks to herself. As midnight approached, Elizabeth decided that she was ready to call it for the night, but as she was about to bid the man a farewell, she asks him one final question, "I've really enjoyed your company, but it is getting rather late,

so before I go, could I get your name, so that we may chat again sometime?” “It has been a pleasure speaking with you this evening Miss, but I didn’t catch your name either. How about this; I’ll walk you home and when I drop you off, we will reveal our true identities to one another and exchange information before we part for the night,” the man proposes. Elizabeth decided that this was the night of change for her, so against her natural hermit instincts, she takes the man up on his offer. As they were getting ready to leave, Elizabeth tells the man that she is going to find Mary and let her know that she is heading out, so he tells her that he will be waiting by the entrance and to meet him there when she is ready to depart. Elizabeth quickly shuffles her way through the crowd until she finally finds Mary. “I’m going to leave now! I’ll see you tomorrow,” Elizabeth shouted. “Okay! Have fun with your new friend, but not too much fun,” Mary jokes; “She must have seen us at the bar,” Elizabeth thought. They both laugh as Elizabeth makes her exit and joins the man to begin the journey home.

The walk home was quiet, only filled with the conversation between the man and Elizabeth. In a now slightly tipsy state, Elizabeth asks the man if he is new to town; she had thought it was odd she had never noticed him before, since they lived in a small town. “I am sort of a recluse; I normally don’t go out, let alone attend parties, so that’s probably why you haven’t seen me around, but I am a long time resident of our lovely little town, you can be sure about that,” he responds with a slight nervousness to his voice, which Elizabeth doesn’t notice in her intoxicated state. As they arrive at Elizabeth’s flat, the man offers to accompany her inside, to ensure her safety. Elizabeth agrees with this idea and invites the man into her house. Once they are inside, Elizabeth proceeds to take off her heels and undo her hair, but as she starts to head for the couch, the man puts his hand on her shoulder and faces her towards him. Slightly frightened, but excited at the same time, Elizabeth continues to let the man control the situation. As the man

begins to take off Elizabeth's mask, he starts to say something. "I am a man of my word, so I will give you my info as you requested, but before I do, I need to ask you something; do you believe in monsters?" "Who in this town wouldn't? There has been a tale of a monster in this very town for many years, why do you ask," Elizabeth nervously responds. It is what the man would say next that would frighten Elizabeth to her core. "Then you already know who I am, as I know exactly who you are, ELIZABETH!" the man shouted, as he ripped off Elizabeth's mask. "How did he know my name? Did he stalk me? And how do I know him," Elizabeth wonders. As she looks back at him, she notices that his eyes begin to glow a fiery bright red, making her rip off his mask in fear, revealing a frightening scar filled face. Frozen in fear, Elizabeth can only stand and watch as the man begins to transform into his true self, sprouting giant iron claws, revealing the monster within; Elizabeth finally knew who she was looking at and it was none other than the monster she mentioned mere moments ago, the Springheeled Jack. Elizabeth, finally broken out of her frozen trance, runs upstairs and locks the door, but Jack quickly follows, and smashes through the second floor with his strong and mighty jump. With nowhere left to go and no one to call out to, Elizabeth falls to her knees in defeat and cries for mercy. "Let's make one final toast! Thank you, Elizabeth, for a wonderful evening, it is truly one I will never forget, and let's give one final thanks to Mary, for sharing her wonderful *taste* in humans with me!" Jack shouts and laughs maniacally. Elizabeth was right about one thing; she had met the man that would end all of her attention troubles.