

Purple Gloves

The biting cold snapped at the girl's bare hands hungrily. It wound itself around her, squeezing into her boots. Her frosty hands fumbled for the icy silver door knob. She twisted her wrist, and a satisfying familiar click greeted her ears. The door opened without a creak despite the miniature blizzard that had taken hold of the small town. Arena darted into the safety of the small wooden hut. "Arena!" Her mother greeted her warmly. The door shut behind her, securing her from the snow.

"I shut the animals in the pen." Arena panted breathlessly. Her mother was seated in front of the fire, the portable radio resting on her lap.

"Anything interesting?" She asked her mother, gesturing to the radio. As if on cue, the reporters crackling voice wafted through the radio's speaker. "And recently this afternoon the body of Miss Summers has been recovered from behind the corner store. Police say the only trace of the killer found was a fleece coat with-" her mother

had switched off the radio. “You should rest. Big day tomorrow.” Her mother’s words left her bewildered as she trudged up the groaning wooden stairs, suspicion nagging at the corners of her mind.

*

*

*

Arena’s cereal tasted dry in her mouth. “Are you sure this isn’t stale?” Her mother didn’t reply. She was preoccupied, staring at a blank space on the wall. Arena wondered silently if her mother had heard her at all. Minutes passed, wordless, and still her mother showed no interest in her daughter whatsoever.

Arena set her spoon down. Her mother slipped on her silky purple gloves and smiled at her daughter. Was it her imagination, or was there a patch of red on the gloves that hadn’t been there before?

“Big day today,” she told Arena, almost excitedly. Arena felt nerves hit her like a speeding car.

“Why?” Her mother didn’t reply straight away,

instead she fiddled with her gloves for a while before saying wistfully, “Go feed the animals...”

Arena did as she was told, braving her way out the door and through the snow coated yard. The old barn appeared warm and inviting despite the holes and cracks in the walls. It was as if there was an invisible force keeping the cold out. As she stooped to pick up the feed bucket, Arena heard footsteps behind her. She spun around. A figure stood concealed in the shadows.

The last thing she ever saw was an outstretched hand wearing a silky purple glove reaching for her throat.