

## Picture Stimulus – Denisa Medrea

The stitches on the side of my head throbbed in pain. My feet damp is from the soggy leaves and my eyes blurry from the powerful roaring gusts of wind. The snap of twigs under my feet echoes around the silent forest. I stop.

The crow's raven-black eyes mock my fear. It has midnight black, dry and jagged feathers. Its long sharp claws scratched against the amber yellow sign sending waves of ear-piercing screeches.

Everywhere I look I feel suffocated into a dark, grim and misty world. The unwelcoming crow files off leaving me standing alone enrobed by the fog. Slowly, I continue up the path ignoring the fact it's a dead end. Suddenly, a crow caws in the distance, cawing my fatal entrance. The trees reach out their long arms so they can scratch my face and arms, barking at me to stay away. With every step I feel more terrified.

The sense of being the hunted prey is overwhelming.

In the distance the looming impressions of trees start to decrease. I spot a rock which I can rest on. It's cold and hard: not pleasant to sit on, but my desperation and fatigue are consuming me. I reached up with my frozen fingertips to my head and felt the impressions on my head. Tentatively, I glanced at my appearance in the puddle at my feet. The ripples of water reveal my face. I reach down to my leg, sewn together by hundreds of stitches, and pull out a thin journal. It's as thin as one sheet of paper, but these pages have revealed many things to me.

I cautiously opened the journal to the last page and unfolded the map stuck on the back cover. The rustle seems to disturb the eerie silence. I stared silently at the map, working out where I had come from, however this journal is in a language I can't possibly understand. The kind old man read it to me, nearly all of it, expect for the directions on the map. Then I had to leave. Quickly.

Once I folded the map, I slid the journal into my pocket and continued up the path. A gentle rustle in the bushes sent me limping at a quicker pace. Who knows what it could be? The tall, trembling trees seemed to become less dense, the forest opened out, and the mist seemed to rise a little. A small cove nestled and hidden in this forest appeared before me and a feeling of relief came over me. I could no longer hear the loud thumping of my heart against my ribcage. I hurried closer and closer.

A small cabin as rotten as dead damp wood stood in between two looming trees, like they were protecting it. The trees are coated in emerald green moss and crawling with small unidentifiable creatures. I reached out to touch the damp moist moss, tilted my head backwards and closed my eyes.

I hear the flutter and crack of wings above me. The crow lay perched ten branches above staring ominously into my soul. Petrified I retreated and navigated towards the door of the cabin. The odour of rotten wood stung my nostrils and mixed with the damp humid air; I could feel my lungs being oppressed. The door is tiny and speckled with moss like the rest of the trees in the forest. I spot something engraved in the wood, two distinct shapes. I reach into my pocket for the journal and place it side by side with the engravings.

A perfect match.

The swirls are identical and as elegant as each other, like two sisters! From my understanding of these symbols, they are a 'V' and an 'F.' I nudge the door and it swings open, intoxicating me with the putrid smell of something toxic. A long open box stands in the middle of the room and shelves dominate the rotten wooden walls. On the far-left side something creaks and groans. A shelf comes flying off the wall and displays an array of fractured glass pieces at my feet. The round and oval glass objects seem to have contained some unidentifiable liquids. As, I look around the room I observe the organised colour arrangement of these liquids, from crimson to amber to sapphire-blue to emerald and violet, never have I seen something like this.

There is, however, a section at the back of the cabin where the wall isn't as colourful but black and white. The wall is plastered with single colour drawings. I lean in and observe closer I observe some similarities with the drawings... and myself.

A tall figure sewn together with the finest body parts that can be found, this can only be the work of him, my creator. A shadowy figure passes the right window and the thud of boots against the hollow planks fills my ears. I run to the right-hand corner, so I will see who ever it is before they see me. Hopefully. The rusty brass handle turns, and the door opens. A human, a man, steps inside, and hangs his coat on the long metal pole.

'Ah Victor Frankenstein, you have really outdone yourself this time!' he exclaims.