

Something in the Field

It was a cold September night on the ranch. The wind rustled through the fading orange tree leaves and swayed the large grassy field that surrounded the isolated countryside house. The field went on for miles until it stopped abruptly at the edge of the dense dark woods. The forest was huge, full of twisted gnarly vines and ancient oak trees. The damp canopy of leaves and branches were so thick, only the thinnest cracks of moonlight could slip through.

A long skinny dirt path emerged out of the woods and cut through the grass, leading straight to the house. A small dog stood barking upon its dusty surface. The sound carried through the window on the second floor to a girl asleep in her bed. She awoke after hearing the dog's loud barking. She sat up and rubbed her tired eyes. It was very late into the night. Long dark shadows crept along her walls and ceiling. She left her bed and made her way across her bedroom to look out the window. Her dog was staring at the grass in the field, yapping nonstop. She'd never seen him like this before. What was the matter with him? She followed his gaze, and there in the grass was a tall black figure, like a shadow. He was just standing there. How strange. The girl walked down her creaky steps to investigate and stopped by the front door. She slid into her slides and unlocked the door to go outside. She looked at the brown grassy hills beyond and at the figure standing there. Was it coming closer? She called her dog in but he didn't even look at her, instead he continued to bark at the field. Something wasn't right. A chill went up her spine and she could swear she saw the figure moving closer. The cold wind blew across her bare skin, prickling the hair on her arms and giving her an eerie sense of unease. She picked up her barking dog and carried him back inside where it was safe, making sure to lock the door behind her.

The next morning the shadow in the field was gone. Relieved, the girl carried on with her regular daily routine. She ate a breakfast of eggs and bacon with her parents, but refrained from telling them about the shadow seen in the field yesterday. It felt like a secret. Afterwards, she completed her chores, washing laundry and cleaning the dishes. Before she knew it, the whole day had flown by. She lay in bed as the sun was setting, her dog by her side, the autumn sky was turning orange and red in the light. She closed her eyes and fell fast asleep.

The night was soon cold and foggy, along with a mysterious breeze in the air accompanied by a prickling chill. Leaves blew gently in the wind and floated to the ground. Moonlight shone down on the concrete patio below as a small blackhaired cat sniffed around for food. She curiously stuck her head into an aging flower pot that had tipped over. The remnants of dirt lay inside its cracked surface. The cat's belly rumbled and she longed for a delicious mouse to feast upon. She could usually find them in the grassy field. It was the perfect place to hunt. The cat steadily slinked into the tall grass. Then with a startled hiss, she came running back out.

There was a bang and the girl's dog was barking again as a small furry creature darted behind the house for safety. The girl bolted out of bed and ran downstairs, the dog behind her. She looked out the window by the door. A pail was laying on its side and there were small dirty animal footprints beside it. Something had spooked it. But what? She shifted her attention to the field. The figure was back, in the same place it was yesterday. Suddenly everything felt wrong again. After making sure all the doors and windows were locked, she shut the blinds on every window in the house. She felt more reassured after securing her home. Then she climbed back into bed, pulled her covers tightly over her head and forced herself to sleep.

The following morning, a small pale ray of sunlight poured through a crack in the blinds and warmed her face. The girl pulled off her bed covers and sprinted across the old wooden floor to the window. She blinked back bright sunshine and peaked through the gap. The shadow was gone from the field. It never stayed past dawn that week. At nightfall, the figure would return to the field to continue its slow creep towards the house. Each night, a little closer than the last.

On the eighth night since the stranger made its appearance, the girl lay awake in her bed, unable to sleep or rest. Her mind was fixated on the shadow in the field. She had to know what it was. The girl ambled out of bed, careful not to disturb her sleeping dog next to her, and went downstairs. She opened the window blinds by the entry door and peered into the field. The shadow was there. She brushed off an unsettling suspicion when she saw it. The girl pulled on her slides and cautiously unlocked the front door. She stepped onto her porch, instantly met with the chill of the night air, and closed the door behind her.

The figure stood ominously in the field. Watching. Waiting. She walked down the lengthy dirt path, coming closer and closer to the shadow. The girl strayed from the path, pushing back long thick strands of grass. She looked up and the shadow was gone. She was right where it had been standing moments before. Where did it go? Suddenly all the feelings she had been keeping inside of her that told her something was very, very wrong came rushing to her attention. A cold tingle went down her spine and the hair stood up on the back of her neck. Her dog began barking at the window from the house. She had to run. Run now and run fast, but before she could lift a foot, something grabbed her from behind and everything went dark.

The silence that permeated the field was punctuated by the soft whistle of the wind gently rocking the heavy grass. It swished back and forth. Upstairs in the old house, from the safety of the girl's bedroom, the dog was still barking.