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### The Red Door

I stood in the middle of the dusty, dark, cold hall hugging myself tightly as I watched my friends shuffling through their backpacks. They pulled out black flashlights and filled them with batteries before tossing one over to me.

“C’mon Serina, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. When will you ever get another chance to say you explored Wilson's Asylum at night?!” the dark-haired boy asked as he gave me a slight smile with mischief-filled blue eyes.

I turned away from him and shook my head, scoffing, “You said we were going somewhere fun, but I didn’t think this was what you had in mind.” The curly-haired skater boy next to Koda began to laugh before they started arguing about something irrelevant. I switched the flashlight on and pointed it at the end of the corridor. At the end of the hall, there was a massive crimson door with black trimming pulsating like a heart.

“Selina, tell this fool that ghosts aren’t real!”

I snapped back to reality at the sound of his voice bouncing off the thick walls and porcelain floor. I looked back at him and noticed they were further than I remembered. I turn towards the door again and see nothing but a cinderblock wall where it stood. I gasped under my breath in confusion before answering, “Uh, I- I believe they can be.”

"Please! You believe them too?!" Koda said as he hunched over a bit and dangled his arms with a look of concern.

"See! She's smart! Listen to me and Selina, man, before you get the spirits ma—" A loud crashing noise interrupts Koda's friend making all of us jump in fear. The noise came from the same direction where the red door stood. We all pointed our flashlights down the corridor and noticed three gurneys toppled over each other.

"Th-those weren't there earlier, Koda," I shook as I hid behind him and hugged his arm tightly.

A sweat drop slid down his face as his heavy breaths fogged in the cold. "Y-you probably didn't notice them before."

"Nah, man. This hall was empty." His friend mentioned as he backed up into the nearest graffitied wall.

Koda shook his head and walked towards the gurneys as we hesitantly followed behind. He examined each gurney and checked all the rooms nearby. The mattresses were stained yellow from the sun over the years, and the wheels were full of rust.

"Probably some kids playing a prank on us. Come on, guys, this is explainable. There are no ghosts." Koda explained as he continued to look through other rooms in the building.

We continued exploring the asylum for a couple of hours and acted as if nothing had ever happened. We would occasionally hear shuffling behind us and the crunch of glass on the ground, but Koda would always come up with an excuse for them all.

Before getting to the basement, I noticed a tiny box at the corner of the abandoned stairwell. I hesitantly reached down to grab the wooden trinket and dusted it off gently with my freezing hands. As I opened it, my lungs began to feel suffocated, and the hair on my arms stood up from the drop in room temperature. My flashlight began to flicker before I hit it against my

palm to fix it. In the process, I dropped the little treasure and noticed a tiny note fall out of it before hitting the ground. I carefully picked the letter out of a pile of glass and read its contents:

*Those aren't your friends Serina.*

My eyes widened in fear as I backed into a wall and pinched the note tightly. "K-Koda? Th-this is some joke r-ri-" I cut myself off after noticing the boys weren't around me anymore. My heart began racing as I searched my surroundings, hoping my friend and the skater pop out. I ran around looking for them as I screamed their names in every depressing room I remember entering before noticing the hall got longer and longer. I stopped suddenly and fell to my hands and knees as tears began to well up in my eyes before streaming down my face. *Where are they? Koda, where are you? Please find me.* I repeated those thoughts repeatedly before noticing a bright red glow reflecting off the floor in front of me. I slowly look up and see it hovering over me. The crimson door. The same door that called out to me before beating to the pace of my heart. I pushed myself to my feet before dusting my hands and cringed in pain as the glass stuck to my hands cut me with each swipe. I began hearing whispers coming from the door but couldn't understand what they were saying. I reached for the glowing golden doorknob and carefully turned it as if touching a delicate glass rose.

My skin went pale white, and my heart sank to my stomach at the sight before me. Behind the pulsating door was an empty room full of news articles and polaroid pictures of me hanging on the walls. I approached a specific article on the wall that seemed to be the source of the whispers:

*Local High School Girl Selina Ramirez, Found Dead in Wilson Asylum's Room 13 After Doctor's Neurological Test Fails. (1932)*

My eyes got wider as my memories began flooding into my mind. Black tears replace my normal ones as I realize one of the gurneys we saw back in the hall belonged to me. I brought my hands up to my face and let out a blood-curdling scream before pulling tightly on my jet-black hair. I hear a shuffle behind me and turn quickly to lock my eyes with the blue-eyed boy staring at me in fear.

"A- a g-ghost!!!" Koda screams before pointing his long, rough index finger at me. Before I could speak, he and his friend screeched at the top of their lungs and ran away. That's when I notice the beautiful brunette girl next to Koda. My best friend. My first love. My first true love, holding hands with that putrid woman.

"That should be me. That should've been me. That was me." I whispered as I chased after them into the dark abyss of the Wilson Asylum—the most haunted asylum in all of Ridgefield, Connecticut.