The Room Behind the Bookcase

"Ma'am we couldn't find a secret room. There was nothing there. I don't know what you thought you saw." Samantha backed up from the police officer. He gently reached out for her arm and she yanked her arm away.

She looked past his shoulder and saw her husband walking swiftly towards them. She turned and started running. "Samantha!" she heard him yell out. She wasn't staying. It was bad enough her mother had forced her into marrying him, but there was no way she was staying with a murderer.

She ran towards the swamp on the other side of the dark house. Her feet were bare, and she could feel every rock that stabbed into her foot, but she wouldn't stop running Why didn't anyone believe her? How did they not see or smell the death hidden behind the bookcase?

Ever since their wedding night she had heard screams. She would startle awake, and her husband would be missing from the bed. She never asked where he had gone, but soon the screams would stop and then he would come into the room smiling and get in bed with her.

She would start to wonder what the screams were, and after she had gotten into bed she would wait, straining her ears to see if she could hear them. She had no idea if it was a woman, man, or child. She had lost endless nights of sleep because she became so obsessed with finding out what they were.

As she finally reached the swamp she could hear the screams still in her head. She knew she had seen bodies ripped to pieces behind the bookcase. She also felt that since she had seen it she would be next. She had to get away.

The sky started to darken as she reached the swamp. There was a flash of lightening and the rumble of thunder soon after. The rain suddenly started to fall and as it fell on her clothes they added to the weight she was already feeling in her heart.

The night before she had waited anxiously to hear the screams. She had gotten out of bed and followed the sounds. She could hear them coming from her husband's office. She peeked through a crack in the door but had seen nothing. She then heard a scream louder than any she had heard before. She turned to run, but a sudden surge of bravery filled her body and she had pushed the door open.

She walked towards the bookcase as the screams filled her head. She saw a book that was stuck out slightly from the others. The screams suddenly stopped. Her hand froze inches from the book, but then she heard what sounded like someone walking towards her. She turned and ran back to bed. She knew that she would have to wait until her husband was gone the next day to investigate.

She wasn't sure if she regretted what she saw. She hoped never to see anything like that again. She knew she couldn't go back to the house. Back to the screams. She would never be able to wipe clean her mind. The blood and broken bones would forever be etched into her soul.

As the rain continued to fall she tried running through the mud in the swamp. She could hear her name being called behind her, but she knew she had to keep moving. The mud stuck to her legs and covered the hem of her pants. She felt like she was getting sucked in. She could hear her husbands voice behind her as her heart fluttered in her chest. She couldn't let him get her.

Samantha sobbed the closer he seemed to get. She fell into the mud and started to crawl, her salty tears mixing with the rain.

"Samantha! What are you doing? Come back home," she heard her husbands voice suddenly above her.

She gave up. She couldn't move anymore. Her legs felt shaky and heavy. She was exhausted and didn't have anymore energy. As he reached down to lift her out of the mud, she fainted.

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"Thank you for showing me the room. I do think she should be seen though," the officer told Samantha's husband and she began to stir.

"I'll take her to see a doctor tomorrow. Thank you, have a good night, Officer," she heard as she came to. She looked up from the sofa she was laying on. Her husband turned around and looked at her.

"You've been a naughty girl," he said shaking his head. Samantha quickly got up from the sofa and a wave of dizziness hit her. He rushed over and gently held her up.

"No, please," Samantha begged as he held her upper arm and dragged her over to the bookcase. He pulled the book she had seen the night before and the bookcase slid open. She tried pulling away from him, but he held her firm and pulled her in behind him.

She could feel her body shaking as she was hauled into the room. The deeper they walked in the stronger the smell. She closed her eyes not wanting to see the blood and broken bones she had seen earlier that day.

"Look," he demanded yanking her in front of him. She squeezed her eyes tighter shaking her head. He grabbed her chin, "Look!"

She opened her eyes and tried not to focus on what was in front of her. She then heard a scream and swiftly turned towards it. There was a fox in a cage. It let out another scream. She froze to the spot shocked. Dead animal carcasses filled a trash bin not too far from the cage.

"I don't usually take my work home with me, but she was scaring the other animals at the vet, so I brought her here," he said. She didn't believe it. She knew what she had seen.

Gothic Elements in the Story

I really had a lot of fun writing this story. I wanted there to be a hidden room that held secrets and she ends up finding out about it because she becomes obsessed with finding out what the screams are. I added a storm because every good Gothic story needs one of those. I purposely didn't name her husband because I wanted him to seem larger than life and a bit of a creepy mystery. I wanted there to be an element of horror, which is why she saw the blood and bones. I didn't want to get too detailed because I only had so much room, but also because my explanation of what happened wouldn't have made sense because I would have had to describe fur.

Going for the Female Gothic theme I needed to have a logical explanation for the screams she kept hearing. I went with a female fox going into heat, which sounds like blood curdling screams. I wanted her to run towards the swamp to add some of the spooky effect to the story and have the reader wonder what was going to happen and build tension. And like any female in a Gothic story, I needed to have my main character faint. I left the ending open to let the reader decide if she had actually seen something, or maybe she is going crazy from lack of sleep. Either way, I hope you enjoyed it. I may have to write more Gothic fiction in the future.