

The Grum

Once upon a time on a dark, wintry night, there was a vast, shadowed forest, touched by moon light. In the forest there was a lake, and in the lake, a hill. And on top of that hill, all quiet and still, grew a house- a hundred stories high, with a very small room, almost touching the sky. It had wide windows through which frisky winds blew, toying with the curtains- flap, flop they flew. And alone in that room she sat in a gloom: meet Izabella Dareana Fabiola Bloom. Shortly its Izzy; a child, we assume.



So the girl could never sleep, and her belly churned up inside, because of all those spooky sounds, that always came from outside. Hooting and howling, and snapping of twigs, rippling ripples, the rustle of leaves. A hiss and a buzz, a coo and a snort, the voices of the darkness, of night, in short.

But, more terrible than this- you can say with a hiss, more dreadful and grim, was the Unknown's abyss. Opposite to Miss bloom's room, at the bottom of a long case of spirally stairs, there was a creepy, somber place, that would give you the scares. The basement it was, in there the Grumbletumblerumble made his den, no one knew where he came from, or even when. But just the mere thought of him made Izzy's heart numb, from now on, in short, we'll call him The Grum.

For he just lay there and waited in his lair. His eyes were a bright spark, as he was rubbing his hands, rubbing elbows with the dark.

And while, down in the blackness the Grum awaited, up there, in her room in the sky, our girl debated: 'should I go down to the basement? Should I find out, what is that monster who lives there, beyond any doubt?'

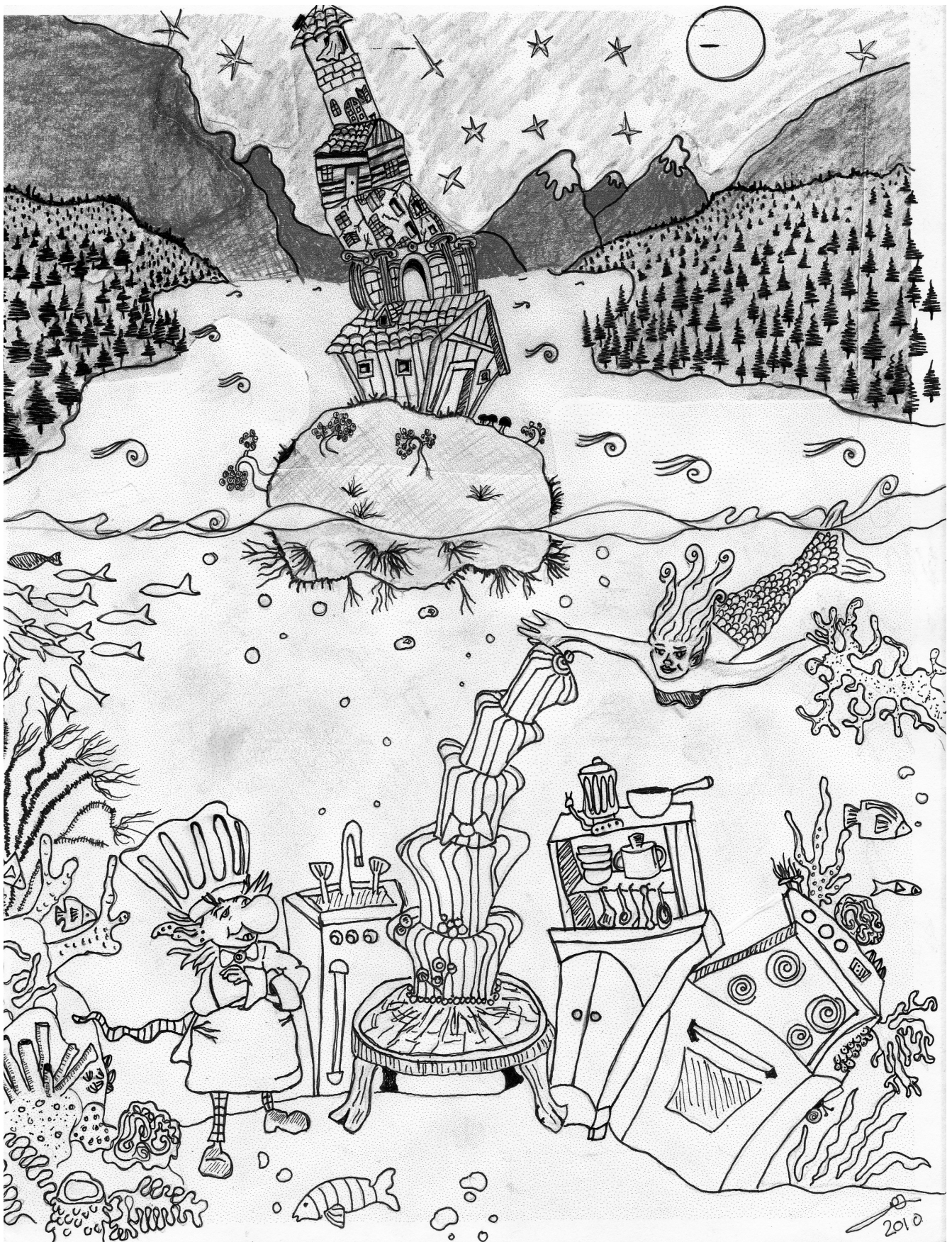
And so, she bravely decided: 'tonight, on my own, I will finally discover what's inside the unknown!' For it was the one thing that needed a compelling explanation, clearly, all those spooky noises already had clarification.

You see, as Izzy's father always said, those twig snapping sounds weren't something one should dread. It was just a yellow elephant who kept stomping around, while looking for his pillow, from sunup to sundown.

And that shrieking noise? Oh, it was just the Weefle Woffle's goslings, playing with their toys. But what's a weefle waffle? Izzy didn't know, and her father said it was a bird, somewhat clumsy and quite slow. A fluffy kind of bird, with porcupine legs, who's main food was ice cream, dipped in mayonnaise and eggs.



The swooshing noises were the ripples in the lake, made by that tiny creature: the Booga-Loo-Ka-Too-Make. ‘And he is- well, you must keep it a secret- a master chef, who loves to play ducks and drakes, and who makes the utmost delicious, ambitious, out-of-this-world cakes. The recipe is confidential and mustn’t be revealed, and so, for the utmost secretevity, the Booga-Loo-Ka-Too-Make with some help from his otter, bakes his cakes, oh, under the water’.



Therefore, while rather concerning, its true, those strange sounds had sound reasons, Izzy knew.

But, there was still that one enigma- it would make anyone groan, the nameless, the unexplained- that of the Unknown.

Down there, a hundred floors below, that Grum could have big, yellow eyes, and long, pointy teeth. A row of scary spikes, with a purple skin beneath. Alas, it probably ate little girls for breakfast, dinner and lunch, she could hear its horrible chewing: munch, munch munch.

Oh, it couldn't be worse of course. Our girl nearly shrieked, almost hid under her cover. But, she made a promise to herself, that tonight she will discover. And so, she clenched her teeth and clutched her hands, clinched her lips, and went on with her plans. She wore her helmet and her boots, and took her lucky rock, she gave it a kiss for luck, and then slowly, she started to walk.

Quietly she moved down the long halls, for there was a family of grumpy mice who lived inside the walls. My, they were sure to make a fuss if woken up that hour- They'd complain and grouch and spit, they'd throw a big, elaborate fit: "We are working mice," they'd grumble, "and by right, we must sleep at least 8 hours a night! The living conditions here are, outrageous," they'd grump, "We demand some peace and quiet. 'Nuf with all this bump and stomp."

At the end of a corridor there was a very small, blue door, that led Izzy to a slide, that took her down to the very first floor. A slide indeed, full of twists and turns, it surely was the best way to go down a 100 floors, without any concerns.

So the slide spiraled down, and spat Izzy out fast, right in front of that door, she never dared to walk past. It stood there so dreadful, so dark and alone, for behind it resided, the unnerving Unknown. You can call it the rum, spine-chilling, The Grum. It is all that is nameless and tameless, all alien things, unexplained, unexplored, oh, the fright that it brings.

Thus, Izzy opened the door, with a creakity crack, then took a deep breath, and walked into the black. And inside it was quiet, still and so glum, that her heart beat so fast, like a restless small drum, dum dum, dum dum.

At the same time, somewhere up on the fiftieth floor, branches on the windows tapped, an owl hooted, and her wings slowly flapped. The tall, old house was loudly squeaking, and over the rooftops through the forest, the cold wind was wildly shrieking.

But Izzy reminded herself: these were just silly noises, they were nothing to fear, it all had a perfectly reasonable, seasonable explanation, it was clear. Everything, that is, except for the Dark Horse inside the basement, in The Grum's lair, that was where she was standing, right then and there.

It was as if the darkness swallowed her whole; we couldn't see her, and she couldn't see anything at all. With one hand, she clutched her magic stone real tight, and with the other, she felt along the wall for the light.

Then softly, "Hello?" Izzy said.

And not a moment later, "Hello!" she heard. "It is I, Grumbletumlerumble, or, The Grum, in short. Grum likes to play Riddles, of the answerless sort."

"But , Grum," Izzy said, "You got it all wrong, because all questions have an answer, you see, before long."

And our Grum chuckled, because he thought it was fun, "positively," he said, "you cannot answer this one! What is the nature of that frightful sound, the one on the rooftop, it leaves the Grum all dumbfound?"

As Izzy bloom slowly paced, her hand searching for the light switch along the wall, she said, "Well, that is no trouble, no trouble at all. Surely, you must know it's Alberta Clipper, an odd lady indeed, as tall as a reed. Always wearing high, black boots, and a long, dark dress, and a big pair of glasses perch on her nose, no less. She's banging on the roofs and she won't let it go, until she'd find that something, she'd hid there long ago."

"Then tell me this: what is that reeh rah, all the jangle and shake? Grum hears it every morning, and it jerks Grum awake?"

"Oh, That is the milkman, and his giant milk lorry. It's quite loud and unruly, but that's all there is to the story."

"Then surely, you won't know who is that dreadful creature out there? It cries woo hoo, and hoo woo, and it gives Grum the scare."

"Oh my, you must mean our neighbor Mrs. Blye. She has the biggest and reddest hair of them all, and the loudest and highest voice in town, like a squall."



And so, all the while we couldn't be sure, what our monster was doing, as it was too dark and obscure. But perhaps he was scratching his head in confusion, since he couldn't come to any conclusion? Maybe he was biting his hair or rubbing his nose, or standing on his hands- for all one knows.

"Mmm..." He mumbled, "umm," and "Grummm..." Then he said:

"Here is a question with no answer for you- Who lives down here? Sure you haven't a clue!"

But to the Grum's surprise, Izzy chuckled with glee. She said, "Simple! It's simply difficult-free. For it is you, the monster, who dwells hitherto, the Grum, the Unknown, the Scare, that is who!"

"I?" the Grum mumbled in obvious confusion, "but The Grum is not scary it cannot be your conclusion. Though Grum lives in the darkness, Grum is quite friendly and harmless, when one gets to know Grum, ones sees he's not charmless."

At that moment, our girl's outstretched hand hit upon a thing, and when we say a thing, we refer to the string. The one that fills up the room with light, if you tug on it slightly, you pull it just right. And of course, she had quite the pleasant surprise, at that moment when things were stripped off their guise. When the light was on and revealed every bit, the Grum wasn't so bad- she had to admit.

At that moment Izzy knew that when you face the Unknown, you open the door to new possibilities you never thought of before.

But the poor Grum sat there, shuddering with unease, he was squinting his eyes and hugging his knees. "Oh no," he mumbled, "oh my oh may, please turn off that frightful light, or I might run away." Izzy grimaced as she was clearly perplexed, she looked puzzled at poor Grum who was utterly vexed.

She said, "light is not something you need to fear, you can see things around you, it makes it all clear."

"The Grum does not wish to see things," said the Grum with a sigh, "for things are bloodcurdling, Grum won't tell you a lie. The sun and the moon, the oceans and trees, these are bone-chilling concepts, it makes Grum's brain freeze."

"Well then, that's what I say," said Izzy to Grum, "You venture out of your lair and just keep your calm. Smell the flowers, the grass, feel the breeze on your face, it will make you feel nice, just get out of this place."

The Grum's ears were now twitching and his teeth clicked too, "Oh my," He whimpered, "dee dye, dee doo. To venture out of the basement, out of Grum's lair? That is a terrible thought, Grum just cannot bear. The Grum has never been outside before, for that is where the unknown is, Grum never opened the door."

"But that is a scandal!" In dismay Izzy cried, "for there are beautiful things out there, you don't have to hide!"

Now, those who knew Izzy, knew she was a kind, thoughtful girl, and she would not let anyone, get stuck in a whirl. "Very well," then she said, nodding with zeal, "I must tell you a secret then, one you cannot reveal."

"What kind of a secret?" the Grum was excited, for secrets were something that made him so delighted.

"Well, it is about this lucky charm that my dad once gave me. He found it on his journey under the tallest fir tree. Its a special kind of stone, with it you will only succeed, it's a little bit of courage, the bit that you need. Keep it well inside your pocket, and it will protect you from harm, it is yours if you want it, I am giving it to you, Grum."

And the Grum, well, he knew not what to say, for such a gift was not a thing, one received every day. But perhaps his silence spoke enough in reply, when a tear glistened at the corner of his eye.

”Grum never gotten a present, not even once, not ever. You are good friend to the Grum, Izzy, from now and forever.”

So Izzy Bloom said with a cheer in her lighthearted voice, “now it is up to you, Grum, every moment, you have a choice. You can stay here forever just as before, or you can face the unknown and open the door.



Thus, as we wrap up this gloomy happy tale, there is only one thing we must unveil; this story is about an end as well as a start, and it is up to you to decide of which one you’ll be apart. So, go make some coffee, play in the sleet, then read the newspaper, or scrub your scaly feet, write a poem or bake a cake with lemon zest, then close your eyes, and decide which ending suits you best.

