

Something wicked
this way come essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Stretched out beyond the horizon the road dragged on snaking away into the distance. The walls of the building were deep in the darkness of the shadows. The small pastel coloured sign creaked as it swung gently on its rusted hinges. 'Candy Box'. It sounded innocent enough and the sun was quickly descending from the sky.

In a few minutes the road will be devoured by darkness leaving Carl Gunstone even more lost. Something suddenly flew from a corner underneath the roof making him almost lose his balance as he fell backwards to avoid the creature. The sound of fluttering wings now fading into the distance, had disturbed the eerie silence. Maybe he was thankful for that, although not knowing what animal's wing had brushed against his face in the chaos of flapping had troubled him more than the blanket of silence had. It was probably just a bird or a bat anyway.

He laughed out loud to himself to try and justify being so frightened, but the forced laugh was soon transformed into a cough in embarrassment as he darted his head from left to right scanning the area for people, in case someone had heard him. Nevertheless he knew no one was there; it was just an instinctive reaction. A shiver ran down his spine as the wind brushed the leaves past his feet. At least going inside would be a welcome change from the cold. He reached out a shaking hand towards the door handle, mentally pushing out the disquieting memories that stealthily encroached on his mind, and pulled the door towards him. The small bell chimed as the door swung outwards.

The ringing sliced the air making it seem even quieter than before whilst the ringing echoed in the back of his head. The shop was empty of people. It was very small and appeared to get smaller as the walls slowly closed in around him. They were stacked with dusty shelves upon shelves, which were laden with large jars containing multi coloured sweets. Were they sweets? Or were they animals, pickled animals in jars of formaldehyde.

Carl Gunstone squeezed his eyes tightly shut and opened them again; no, they were sweets. Even so, he couldn't shake free the idea of how much the liquorice snakes looked like worms writhing in amongst each other and how the rainbow coloured gobstoppers looked like bloodshot eyeballs packed tightly in the jar. Can I help you? ' A deep, husky, elderly woman's voice croaked from the doorway. He didn't know how long she'd been there, watching him.

Her question did not sound impolite but at the same time it did not sound altogether friendly. She had probably watched his eyes darting over the sweets, suspiciously eyeing the vibrantly coloured wrappers; which were now fading into duller forms of their former selves. The dust particles danced in the air before mournfully falling back towards the ground as the woman's feet disturbed them from their years of rest. She slowly shuffled towards the counter; which was situated just beyond him.

Her feet barely left the ground as she tediously travelled from the doorway. The brown apron that covered her faded plain black dress moved gently, not with her movement but with the light breeze that seemed to squeeze through the cracks in the walls. The low squeaks from the rusted sign were

still audible from inside although now they were slightly muffled. The sickly smell of sweets hung in the air choking and suffocating. The woman now stood behind the counter; she leaned against it wearily resting her arm on the old fashioned till.

Now she was out of the shadows he turned to look at her, out of curiosity and politeness. Her grey hair was tied back but wisps fell lifelessly around her face, which was small and shrunken as her loose wrinkled skin clung to her bones as if in order to stay on. She was not thin though, he could see from under her apron she was not completely segregated from indulgence, but what was expected from someone living in a sweet shop? It wasn't like there was anything else to do and it was miles from nowhere; he presumed she lived there. Her eyes were directed down towards the counter as if examining something extremely interesting that she had never noticed before.

Carl Gunstone looked down to see what had caught her attention; he couldn't see anything so looked up again. As his eyes were rising her gaze caught his, her cold, hard, stare making his body go cold and at the same time taking his breath away. Her eyes were clear and bright, piercing blue, as if someone had taken a young inquisitive child's eyes and placed them in the sockets of an aging decrepit woman.