

Future memories essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The hall was dark and quiet.

Shadows from the candle darted across the walls and illuminated the furniture, forming unearthly shapes. The only other light was the moonlight that crept through the gap in the old moth eaten curtains. It was a normal night at the old mansion in the countryside. But then, nothing out of the ordinary ever happens when you live miles from any other civilisation, completely isolated.

Hester carried her candle through the antique world that was her home. She could pick out the shapes of pictures, statues, tables and a grand piano in the dim light. The kitchen was at the end of a long stone passageway, which was empty apart from the presence of a few oak doors. Hester walked towards it, through a large wooden door and into the tiled, unlit room.

She walked towards a large industrial sink, picked up a glass and filled it. Hester made her way back to her bedchamber on the third floor. In the attic Hester's daughter Maggie slept poorly. She kept having the same recurring nightmare. She'd had it since she was four.

She was walking through the grounds of the manor, looking for something or someone – she never figured out which, when a girl began to chase her. She was a strange looking girl – almost ghostly. She was gaunt and pale, with long, straight black hair, and cruel black eyes, which were full of hunger. They were like chilled steel or black, empty tunnels which lead to a soul that was unable to love anyone.

The girl looked strangely alike Maggie, but quite a few years older and nowhere near as warm and bubbly as her. The girl would pursue Maggie into the entrance of the house and into the vast library. There, the girl would open a stone passage through the fireplace and force Maggie into it so that she was trapped. It was at this point that Maggie would wake up in a cold sweat. Weeks passed, and the manor and its grounds grew white with frost and snow, but inside there was a warm and friendly atmosphere, emphasised by the glowing embers of the fires.

The small family was happy and merry as Christmas neared, however, Maggie's sleep worsened. Her dream had changed, and instead of being chased by the pale girl, she was chasing a younger girl. The younger girl had a likeness of Maggie about her, but it may have been just coincidence. The night after her dream, Maggie's parents, Hester and James, sat her down in the parlour to talk. "We need to tell you something," James said, slowly.

"It's about our family," Hester continued. Maggie sensed something was wrong so instead of wondering she asked her parents directly. "Oh, there's nothing wrong sweetheart," was the reply her mother gave. "Then what is it?" Hester and James broke into two enormous smiles. Maggie was confused. "We're having a baby!" her parents chimed in chorus.

Maggie didn't know what to say. She knew she was supposed to be happy, but how could she? Knowing that her parents' love was going to be focused on two people instead of just one was unbearable. Maggie ran the four flights of stairs until she reached her room in the attic. There, she sat on her bed, closed the curtains of her four-poster and cried.

She thought of all the things she would have to give up in order to have a brother or a sister. All her toys, her space, her privacy, her books and her run of the grounds were just some of the things that were going to have to go. Maggie felt slightly guilty. After all, her parents had looked so happy before they had broken the news.

They were probably expecting her to start smiling too and give them a big hug, but instead they had a bratty little girl who was only bothered about her belongings. It was at this point in Maggie's thoughts that she dried her eyes and went to see her parents. She did give them a big hug. " I'm sorry," she muttered meekly.

" I was shocked that's all, but I am happy, I really am. " " That's okay sweetie, we're sorry for making you shocked and I promise that I'll always treat you as my first and most precious little baby," Hester cooed. Months passed and eventually Maggie had a baby sister named Lucinda. Hester looked much different. Where there had been a tall, slender brunette with a beautiful face, there was now a chubby housewife with wrinkles and shadows around her eyes.

Of course most of the changes were the effects of the baby, but Hester was taking less care of herself than she always had done. Maggie thought this was unusual as her mother had always been an extremist and nothing had ever interfered with her daily routine. That was the strange thing though, something was interfering with it – alcohol. Maggie never knew why Hester began drinking, but she knew why she always seemed so depressed. Her and James were having big problems or so it seemed.

They used to have arguments, which were usually ended in either Hester or James turning to violence. Maggie recalled one argument in particular, before the big problems started. “ Why can’t we ever go anywhere? ” Hester shouted. “ What’s the point? You wouldn’t be able to fit it into you’re “ schedule”, “ James snapped sarcastically. “ How would you know? You’re too self absorbed to ever consider asking me.

” “ How can I, when you’re too busy organising the house and seeing to Maggie? ” “ You leave Maggie out of this! ” “ Why?! She’s the reason you’re such a pain in the arse! ” It was at this point in the argument that tears had begun to well up in Maggie’s eyes.” What are you talking about? ” Hester shrieked. I’m talking about you never giving me or Lucinda a second glance because of your “ precious little baby Maggie”,” James imitated fiercely. In a flash of breaking china and screaming Hester had thrown a fairly sized vase at James’ forehead.

A large gash appeared across his pale white skin of his face and he fainted. Hester fell to her knees beside him and started apologising. She then ran off to fetch a jug and a cloth. Maggie could never understand this. How one minute her parents could be fighting and shouting but the moment one of them was hurt it was as if they were a happy family again and the injuries had happened accidentally. Maggie thought that that had to be the worst argument her parents could possibly have but that, that was merely the beginning.

Time went by, Lucinda grew bigger but so did the fights. Hester now had a long cut in one arm and quite a few bruises, only to be matched by James’

gash in his head and bad leg. One morning in summer, Maggie awoke to a loud thudding from downstairs and her sister's cries. She quickly threw on her silk dressing gown and slippers and tiptoed down the flights of wooden steps as quietly as her little eight-year-old feet would allow. She peered through a crack in the door, into the room where the noises were coming from.

What she saw terrified her to the deepest part of her soul. She couldn't move, she just stood transfixed at the terrible scene that lay before her eyes. Maggie knew that no matter what happiness she gained from later life, this would haunt her forever. Inside the room was Hester. She was stood over someone, someone who was dead! That someone was Maggie's father, James. He looked in an awful state.

It was hard to distinguish his features because of the blood but his daughter couldn't mistake him for anyone. Hester had collapsed on one of the chairs; there was a knife at her feet. She looked gaunt and shocked, almost sad. Maybe she was, Maggie thought, but then, how could she be? If Hester had had enough compassion to feel sad she would never have been able to do such an evil thing. Hester looked up and saw two small eyes half hidden behind the doorframe.

" Sweetheart? " she whispered but it was barely audible through her heavy breathing. Maggie panicked. What if her mother was going to kill her too? Without thinking much she bolted up the stairs like lightning, ran into her room, and locked the door. Maggie couldn't hear her mother following her so she assumed that she mustn't have had the strength to do anything just yet.

Lucinda's wails could still be heard tearing up the usual silence of the manor. Thousands of questions filled Maggie's mind.

Why had her mother done it? What had father done to deserve it? What would happen now? Did her and Lucinda await the same fate? So many questions that she couldn't answer. Maggie couldn't cry – she was too shocked. She thought about what she'd have to do next. After all, she couldn't stay in her room forever could she? “ Honey can I come in? ” were the words that broke Maggie's train of thought. She jumped with fright.

What would she do? Should she let her mother in? “ I promise I won't hurt you, baby,” Hester cooed. How do I know? ” Maggie stammered. “ You never will if you don't let me in,” her mother replied. Maggie slowly crept off her bed and walked towards the door.

As she got halfway across the room she stopped. The room started to go fuzzy and Maggie couldn't focus. The lights started to go from bright to dull and back again whilst her head began to pound. Maggie had only ever had this feeling before when she was six. She had gotten into trouble for throwing a vase and her dad had told her off so badly that she fainted.

Tears welled up in her eyes at the thought of her father but it was hard to concentrate on him with all her curious symptoms. Before Maggie had had time to realise why she felt like she was falling, she had blacked out. Maggie awoke later with a start. She sat up to find that she was lay in her own four poster, with the curtains closed and a fresh glass of water on her bedside cabinet.

Relief washed over her like a warm sea. It was a dream she thought – the whole thing had been a terrible nightmare. With excitement Maggie opened the curtains of her bed, pulled on her slippers and dressing gown and skipped into the middle of the room towards the door. Maggie quickly jumped back with shock. Her door lay on the floor, clean off its hinges. There were splinters of wood dotted around on her carpet and on the landing outside.

In her dream she had locked the door and her mother had wanted in, but that was impossible – after all it was only a dream. Maggie didn't want to waste any more time in finding out what had happened so she ran downstairs as fast as she could and went through the rooms to find her parents. When only the living room was left and Hester and James were still not found Maggie burst through the door expecting to see her parents enjoying breakfast or having a chat, but instead, a horrific scene befell her eyes. There was Hester sat in the same chair she had done in Maggie's dream, but on the floor were bloodstains, bloodstains in the exact spot her father's body had been. " No, no..

. can't be... " Maggie stammered. " Maggie baby? " comforted Hester.

Maggie didn't run off this time. The realisation that the whole thing had been real had hit her with a terrible force. However, when she had fainted she had just been put to bed, not harmed in any way. Surely this meant she would be fine. Without thinking much more Maggie ran over to her mother and give her a big hug. She couldn't understand why she felt so happy.

It was unreal. She had never felt so guilty in her life, even after she'd run off crying about the baby. Her father's body was lying somewhere and Maggie was happy. She had to work hard to contain the smile that was trying to break free from inside her. Perhaps it was the utter relief that she wasn't going to get hurt that was making her feel so pleased. Either way Maggie secretly knew that she had never felt so warm and safe in her whole life.

Eight years had passed and life had never been more different at the old manor. Everything had changed, in Maggie's case, for the worse. She was sixteen and if it weren't for portraits of her younger self she would never remember how she used to look. Now, whenever she looked in the mirror she saw someone who was not herself, or at least not someone who she used to be. The someone was a tall pale girl with long straight black hair, a gaunt face, and cruel black eyes.

Hester looked just as bad. Even when she'd gone from being thin and slender to a frumpy housewife, it was nothing compared to how she looked now. All she ever wore was black. Black tops, black jewellery, black skirts, black dresses and black shoes.

Not to mention the black make-up that always covered her face. Where her eyes used to be dark green, it almost looked as though they were black as well because of all the eye liner, mascara and eye shadow that she wore, which was naturally, all black. Hester and Maggie weren't the only things that had changed though. The house had also undergone some dramatic changes. Where there used to be all the coloured paintings and china sets, there were grotesque statues.

Draped in black lace. Also, there had been beautifully carved oak furniture but now there was wrought iron tables and chairs, littered with candles and stuffed animals. There is only one word to describe what had happened to the manor, – it had become gothic! The changes had occurred at Hester’s whim, who had never quite recovered after the death of her husband.

Although she had stopped drinking, which Maggie was over the moon about, Maggie thought that her mother had become very strange in mind. She had certainly changed a lot, which was surely the result of some kind of deep-rooted mental problem, or at least that was Maggie’s theory.

The only person who hadn’t seemed to change at all, unless you counted eight years of growth, was Lucinda. She hadn’t been made to do anything to her personal appearance what so ever. She also wasn’t as overprotected as Maggie because she was allowed to go into the grounds whenever she wanted, even after dark, whereas the moment twilight loomed, Maggie was made to stay where her mother could keep an eye on her. She really resented this, because now it was Lucinda who had the first run of the grounds. Maggie always questioned why Lucinda didn’t have to where black along with all the overprotection dilemmas.

“ Because you’re my precious little baby and I want you to follow in my footsteps,” was always the reply. Maggie hated this. When she had first found out about having a baby brother or sister, she had been hoping that her mother would always treat her as her favourite child, but she would now give anything to be the only half loved Lucinda. This favouritism and protection wasn’t just a recent occurrence, it had gone on since Lucinda had

been able to talk and walk. All these years of black oppression had begun to drive Maggie mad.

She was having her old dream every single night, however she couldn't remember having it. It was a peculiar feeling whenever she awoke. She knew she'd had the dream but she could never remember what anything looked like. One night Maggie went to bed as usual, except this time, she could remember the dream.

She jumped awake quickly and checked her clock. She already knew it must have been early because it was so dark. It turned out to be three o'clock in the morning. Maggie heard noises from outside so she went to her bay window to look. She didn't know who it could be because no one ever travelled past their mansion.

She saw a small figure pottering around outside on the grass. Maggie knew from a distance that it was Lucinda. Although she was envious of her freedom, Maggie didn't want her younger sister to get hurt. It was such a cold, dark, and wet night that Lucinda could trip and break something or, in these weather conditions, catch pneumonia.

She pulled on her coat and ran downstairs into the entrance hall. There, she quietly opened the huge oak front doors, as she did not want to disturb her mother. She got outside and began searching for her sister in the place where she'd seen her from her window. The rain lashed on her face causing her to shiver, however, that might not have been the only reason why she was shivering, because it was the first time that Maggie had ever been on her own outside in the middle of the night.

All of a sudden the faint shapes of trees and bushes that she had been able to pick in the darkness disappeared and Maggie was plunged into complete darkness. A girl appeared in her mind and she looked identical to herself. It was the girl from her dream, she remembered. Whereas previously the girl's eyes were cold and emotionless, for the first time they looked alive.

The girl began to chase Lucinda into the fireplace – a filmstrip in her Maggie's mind. Lucinda looked exactly like the younger girl she'd chased in her dream. Maggie clearly thought she was having an episode. Her surroundings began to re-appear around her and Maggie could pick out rows of flowerbeds and trees, but no Lucinda.

To her fright there was another person, clearly the girl who looked like herself from her dream. “ Go,” the girl's voice echoed – she even sounded like Maggie, “ Just do it and you will never have to feel jealous anymore – you and your mother will be able to live in peace. ” Maggie had no idea where it came from, but was filled with an adrenaline rush so powerful she felt as though she could run forever. The only thing that crossed her mind was finding Lucinda.

She must find Lucinda. Maggie began to run through every corner of the grounds, it was taking forever, and the rain and cold was stinging her face, but it didn't matter. All she needed to do was find her sister. She reached the orchard and there, there she saw it, a pair of bright eyes peering behind one of the many apple trees.

Maggie's heart began to race. She started to shout things at Lucinda.

Terrible phrases like, “ I'm going to kill you! ” and, “ you're going to wish

you'd never been born. " Lucinda ran off in the direction of the house so Maggie followed. When they had both reached the entrance hall Lucinda began to scream. She ran into the huge library, where she realised that she'd made a big mistake – there was nowhere left to run.

The two girls heard clattering from one of the bedrooms, then the thudding of feet on stairs. Maggie knew she would have to act quickly. She backed her sister into the cavernous fireplace, ignoring her cries and pleas for mercy. With a quick pull of lever next to one of the bookcases, Maggie had activated the back wall of the fireplace, causing it to rotate and trap Lucinda behind it.

Banging and screaming could be heard from inside the fireplace along with an attention-seizing cough from someone behind Maggie. It was Hester.

Maggie was terrified because her mother had seen the whole thing, however, instead of shouting at her daughter she ran over and scooped her up in her arms. Maybe Hester was proud that her daughter had followed in her footsteps by killing a family member, however, it was more likely to be that they now had a huge thing in common with each other – they both had a terrible secret.