

## CHAPTER 14

He was building it now.

This was her assumption. No, strike that, this was her *knowledge*. She knew, now, that evil people could not be stopped. You could only ignore them, and encourage others to ignore them.

Unfortunately for Care, she did not have this luxury. While one could, in any normal situation, easily walk away from evil the moment it made its way into his or her presence, such an option was not available this time. This had nothing to do with fear, or with the consequences of making a bad choice. Rather, it was a physical limitation.

Care's physical limitation was a lack of strength. More specifically, the strength required to break open a closet door.

She was never very confident in her ability to do so, but nevertheless, she tried it several times. While this feeble attempt didn't exactly earn her the freedom she sought, it did earn her considerable pain.

She hadn't noticed the small shelf above her, or the nail sticking awkwardly out of the door. Lying on the shelf was a small box, which, after a swift kick in an attempt to break the door, fell down and hit Care on the head. Small crayons fell out and covered the closet. However, that wasn't really the painful part; the painful part was that her foot had kicked the precise location of the nail.

Marvin was far too busy and stressed out to notice the scream, and subsequent crying. Building his machine all over again was not his idea of fun; weeks of work were ahead of him - weeks in which he could have been having *real* fun.

He didn't intend to open that closet door until he was finished. It had completely escaped him that, for a normal human to survive, they must be fed. Not to say that Marvin didn't have this need, he simply forgot that other people worked the same way.

The closet was black inside.

The nail was red on the tip.

The crayons came in many different colors.

Care wasn't a fan of colors. She always thought that there were far too many of them. Most of them were a waste to her - red was horrible, blue was cold, orange was ugly, and the rest were simply useless.

Except, of course, for green. Green was nice.

But green was simply a memory; a memory of the good days, when life was synonymous with happiness and peace, when things

were much more clear to her, and when nobody bothered to sleep - getting tired of anything was an unfamiliar concept. She was brighter back then, more energetic back then, but that was all gone.

She had practically forgotten how to count. It was impossible to sleep, you see, and every night she would count as many sheep as necessary, which was usually several thousand. Only problem is that she would skip from 519 to 571 in an instant. Several sheep were not getting the attention they wanted.

Everything was beginning to fall apart. No, actually, that's not true. That happened a long time ago. Years ago. She was ready to give up.

The closet began to morph and fade away.

The walls were consumed with liquid, and the colors disappeared, along with everything else. Care began to drown in her own thoughts, her own fantasies, her own tunnels. They lifted her up, these thoughts, and sent her into the ceiling. Numbers, structures, complications - they attacked from all sides, and all that remained was a pile of crayons on the floor, wondering exactly what happened.

One explosion. Several explosions. Crackling sounds.

A bed. A window.

Dolls.

The walls were green. Perfectly green. Nowhere else in the world was there a better green than the one she was staring at. Suddenly it started to glow.

"I'm going now," said a voice in the distance. It echoed around the room a couple million times.

"Where?" Care asked, sitting on the bed. She waited several minutes for a response, but got nothing.

"I'm going now," the voice repeated. This time it only echoed for half a second, and the voice disappeared forever.

Silence.

The walls began to fill with a sickening black liquid. It spread around evenly until the entire room was covered. Care looked around in awe, watching the transformation. The liquid rose up and covered the bed, as well as everything else.

She stood up and screamed. Her legs were covered, and it was slowly continuing to rise. She slipped and landed on the floor; the liquid reached her head and started making its way around her face. It dried in a matter of seconds.

There were crackling sounds.

All she could hear were crackling sounds.

A gigantic clump of black paint peeled off of the ceiling and fell down to the floor. Yet another layer lied behind it. The green was gone, almost like it had never existed.

Another clump fell. Still no green in sight.

This continued for a long time. The clumps collected in an enormous pile, under which was Care, struggling to break free. Buried in the paint, she had nowhere to go, and the pile was getting heavier.

The green never showed up. More layers of black paint revealed themselves, falling down and adding to the pile.

Breathing ceased.

This didn't feel like a tunnel. This felt like something else. Almost like life as she knew it was already one big tunnel, and *this* was reality. But what happens when you die? Do you enter the tunnel again? Surely enough, this is exactly what happened.

Care sat down on a pile of crayons, scattered around the closet, and looked up at the ceiling in fear. No paint. No clumps. Unfortunately, being trapped in a closet probably wasn't any better than being trapped under a large pile of black paint.

In the distance, she could hear Marvin walking about. He was still working on the machine, and by god he was going to finish it.

She picked up a green crayon and began coloring the door.