

## A Haunting Tail

By: Angela Daley

My Katie told me we were leaving this weekend leaving my room, leaving my yard, my special place in between the bush and the fence where no body, but my favorite person, Katie, could find me. I don't want to leave. I don't even know where Nevada is. What it is or if it'll have my special place. I know Katie and her mother leave every morning and the man leaves every night, but they always come back. Does that mean that I will come back? I watch Katie get into the oversized carrier and it backs out into the road and disappears. They always come back, that must mean I will too. Good, cause I don't wanna leave my home, my special place, and my Katie.

I know this place inside and out I've been in every

nook and cranny of this house it surprises me to this day that when I go to explore when the mom is home and she still yells at me, if she can only see me now as I climb up the dress in the back of her closet and up into the attic. The attic has to be my second favorite special place. If I go towards the light and stare out the looking glass I can see the whole world. That's where I found Dukes, the four-legged idiot, who digs all day only to forget what he dug the next day and does it all over again. I will never get that, but I will miss him too. I watch the house day in and out nothing ever happens and that is the best thing in the world, stability. If I couldn't have that then I would go nuts.

Like clockwork I see Katie pull up in the carrier with the mom. But something is wrong I can tell instead of Katie's cheerful smile she stomps out of the carrier and into the front looking glass. She has been crying she sees me and falls into the small bed. I don't need to be invited I jump onto her lap rub my head on her chin and immediately. I can feel her calm down. I don't wanna leave she tells me. I am going to miss my friends. My home. She gets me and I get her. We both hate this leaving thing. Her mother struggles her way into the home with huge crates. I scatter; the last time I saw things like those I was shoved

in them poked and pried at and no thank you not again. I peak around the back of the cushions and watch as the mother hands the crate to Katie and Katie walks so sadly up the stairs. I follow I'm curious if those crates aren't going to encase me then what are they for. Katie sits on her bed and tosses her fake animals into the crate. So sad. I try to make her smile again I jump onto her bed and fake play with one of the animals it always made her laugh. But not this time. This is bad.

A few more days like this and finally I wake up with the big fire fly and I see a large carrier, larger than I've ever seen before, pull up next to the porch smashing right through my special spot. I hate this carrier. I race down to it and two men stomp through the bushes and rip open the back of it I voice my hatefulness as loud as I could, but the men kick their feet at me. I hate this. I flee to find Katie she's sitting in her own carrier. She picks me up and holds me tight. She hates this too. The mom and man sit in the carrier and for the first time in my life I get to ride in the carrier on Katie's lap.

I must have dozed off cause when I stretch and look up at my Katie the car stops. I'm a little scared, but when I see the enormous home standing in front of our carrier I get too curious for my own good. Katie opens the door and I

launch myself out and into the bushes that surround the home. I only get a few feet to know that this is not a special place. I rip through the bushes and start to clean myself from these red thorns. It must have taken me longer than I thought because when I finished the firefly went to bed and nightlife is about to wake up. I look around listening for the crickets or owls or even the night mice. But oddly enough there's none of that here. I cautiously find my Katie. She is inside taking out all of the fake animals she packed a few days ago. I jump on the bed for some familiarity comfort. She scratches the back of my head and we fall asleep together.

The next day starts off with a bang. Katie is nowhere to be found and the mom and man are gone too. Where are my humans? Why did they leave me in this strange place? I recognize the artifacts the cushions and toys stuffed in all different sized crates, but this place there's something wrong with it. I wonder if they noticed it too. I see something to my left I immediately chase it trying to find my Katie. I freeze this is not my Katie. This is not the mother or the man. This is not even human. I don't move a muscle as this thing floats from the ceiling to the floor. It doesn't stand there like a human does more like a fish in Katie's old fish bowl. It hovers over the floor.

Its fingers and toes stretch to lightly graze the floor as if it needed a little support to stay there. It lays flat with its elbows sticking up past its back. Its leg stretches over its hand and quickly pushes itself at me. I can't even move like that and if I can't, then that thing shouldn't be able to either.

I flee. I flee as fast as I can I race to the door then skid to a stop remembering my special place isn't there anymore. Where too? I look back and the thing is racing after me; its limbs snapping in and out of place trying to grip my tail. The hell with this. I go up. Up and up and up. I find the attic stairs opened welcoming me up into the safe zone. I scurry behind a carrier and peak around the corner at the hole in the floor lit up with the trapped fireflies in the glass below. I see the fingers grip the edge of the light hole just as I thought I was a goner a slam echoes throughout the house and the thing is gone. Back down the stairs and to greet – Katie's voice accompanied by the man's and the mothers fill the house.

No! My heart pounds faster as I imagine that thing grabbing a hold of Katie's little tails on her head. I launch myself down from the attic I stop at the top of the stairs. I see the thing hovering over Katie. I hiss Katie and the adults look up at me, but they can't see the thing.

I do the only thing I can think of; I lunge myself over the railing and claws and fangs bared I'm ready to meet this thing head on. But instead of sinking my teeth in the thing I hear it snicker and my teeth sink into the man's hand. I'm chucked against the wall and I race away. I hide under the counter. I can't believe that just happened. I can't believe I fell for that. If it weren't for the man I would have hurt my Katie. That thing is going to pay. It's going to die for what it just made me do.

That night the thing was back. I was locked out of Katie's room and that thing was able to go in and out of any room it pleased to. I need to show my Katie what is wrong I needed to show her that I was only trying to protect her. I sit outside her door calling for her trying to get her to open the door. My heart skips a beat when the door opens I look up to see Katie, but nothing was there. I don't like this. I creep inside the dark room looking for my Katie. She is lying in a deep sleep curled up with her fake bear.

The thing is behind me I know this, but I don't know what to do; thinking quickly I let out the loudest shout I could to warn her. The thing rips me off of the bed I watch unable to stand as it claws at Katie's legs. Katie screams out in pain and the man and mom bursts through the door.

They examine the scratches and automatically scope me up and I'm tossed out into the night. I stare up at Katie's window I see the things beady eyes glaring down at me gloating. It disappears from my sight and I can't keep from thinking it's doing something awful to Katie. I cry out to warn them as loud as I can and I don't stop. I don't stop when the man comes out with a broom and tries to shoo me away and I don't stop when the fire fly wakes back up. It is only until I see Katie emerge from the house that I stop. I race up to her, but she backs away frightened. But it wasn't me I try telling her. But these stupid humans don't understand me. Katie used to be able to understand.

I watch as they pull away from the house. I will have to show her. I look back at the house, but how. I walk around outside until I find my way back into the attic. I creep my way through the attic without making a sound. I'm down the stairs and in Katie's room. I feel the presence of that thing so I duck underneath the dresser. I see the thing hover into the room for a few seconds then back out like it knew I was in the house, but couldn't seem to pinpoint me. I laugh inside. The door opens and I wait to hear Katie's voice, but it is only the mom. I sneak up to the edge of the stairs and I see she juggling a few things while talking to the black box again.

The thing is hovering in the corner stalking its oblivious prey. She puts the phone down and rummages through one of the crates. She finds a large black square it must mean something to her because she smiles and quickly points it at her and presses down on a button. A flash goes off and instantly the thing becomes enraged. It lunges for the piece of paper that is ejected from the box. I leap to it as well. If it angered the thing that bad it must be something that I can use against it. The mom freaks out trying to grab me, but I slip in between her hands snatch up the paper in my mouth and race out the door to find Katie. But instead of leaping onto the porch I slam into the back of a crate. This cannot be happening, not now, not that I'm so close of showing Katie. I yell and scream and claw at the crate sides. I look around for the paper, but as I look out the window I see Katie crying hugging her mother's leg and her mother waving the paper back and forth.

I don't know the day or if the firefly is awake or not. I don't know how long I've been away from Katie or why they did this to me. I lay down in the same spot I have been since I was tossed into this cold crate. I don't bother to eat or drink the water. It's not the same. I could've have done something else something smarter. I only



think about how Katie is and if she is okay. I hear a loud voice from the other room. I lift my head up to see the human staring at the box. I glance over at the box and see the man and mother's image on the screen. Every sense in my body pulses with anxiety. What does that mean? Where is Katie? Then I see it; I see Katie's body being covered. And I see that thing hovering over her. The thing peers through the box at me laughing boasting that it won, before it flicked out of sight.