

The Witch

Rebecca Denton

Bong, bong, bong.

As the ancient, sacred clock drummed to the beat of the night, striking the loneliest hour, the young girl stared through the thin layer of windowpane glass, the only thing that separated her from certain obliteration.

In fact, every night the girl would stare through the window, unblinkingly, at the blurred outline of the gnarled old pine across the road. She would gaze intently at the towering, black mammoth...wondering how old it was, wondering how it had survived. She would stare until her eyes wept from concentration, until the topmost limb of that tree clearly defined itself something malevolent.

The cold, whistling winds that gusted from the north against her darkened window transformed into the whispering, taunting voices of a distant witches' coven, and that topmost limb defined itself as a witch on her broom coming to get the girl.

Constant shivers traveled down her spine as she huddled under the protection of her blankets, waiting.

Although the witch always came to the girl at the time right between awareness and infinity, the time when the girl's body would finally give into its nightly struggle with Morpheus, the girl never bothered anymore to tell her parents about the evil witch; because they did not, would not, believe. Whenever the girl's parents caught her reading fairytales, they always told her to put away those "nonsense books" because goblins, elves, fairies, and angels—creatures of the other realm—did not exist, could not exist. Her parents believed only in the powers and religion of science, not in the potentials of science-fiction or the power of the unseen. Their imaginations were quite dead to the possibilities of tree limbs that could turn into witches.

But the wise girl knew differently, and her imagination delighted in a firm belief of the other, of the unseen. Someday that witch would come and get the girl. It didn't matter how many times her parents had beaten the witch and the girl's imagination down. Only if the girl stayed awake and wary would she be safe, and she knew it.