

Grazer Manor

Angry, grey clouds rolled over the bleak, Romanian skies, the light escaping, trying to avoid the thunderstorm that is brewing. A derelict manor stood. This was once a very elegant house, the door with a gold-plated knocker, the stained windows with depictions of the Bible, the interior that had once been gold-pated mahogany, is now taken over by nature. What once was a beauty is now a beast.

Outside of the house, standing behind its cracked fountain was a landlord called William Baker. The rain was flowing down his long greasy hair, onto his white skin, and finally traveling down onto his crooked nose. Mr Baker wiped the water away with the back of his hand. He was grinning, as just the previous day he had treated himself to a brand-new watch, his crooked teeth stuck out of his mouth as he did so. He glanced down onto the murky ground and inspected his outfit. His brown tweed suit and worn-out jeans did not match. However, William did not care about his appearance. In fact, many people have said he has an aura of dislike to him, which even himself agreed with. Mr Baker is a man of one talent; crookery. William was a man who loved to see misery from people. Nothing made him happier than to see the unhappiness on other people's faces. William decided to take up a new project in Romania. He had overheard a conversation about a supposed haunted house in Romania that has been put on sale from an absurdly low price, so Mr Baker decided to buy this house and see how cheap he could rebuild it for. Mr Baker walked up the final four steps to the rotting, decaying, vile door. His hand twisted the handle and he stepped in.

The door creaked open and omitted and let out an ominous sound. A shiver suddenly ran down Mr Baker's spine, his nerves sending millions of signals, warning him that this is a danger. However, Mr Baker ignored the signals and continued down the corridor. Blackout. The door slammed behind him, leaving Mr Baker alone. Even the light did not dare enter in this house. Mr Baker was not concerned, he searched the house for a few minutes and found an oil lamp, luckily there was still some oil left. He then took out his wallet; there were no pictures of anyone in it, Mr Baker hated to admit it, but he was a lonely man, this environment suited him the best. Lighting the lamp, a brilliant, orange light was emitted, travelling to all the nooks and crannies in the room. Mr Baker looked up and saw a cracked gold-plated mirror that had centuries of dust over it. Lifting a hand, he wiped off some dust. A distorted face was reflecting from the mirror, a psychotic smile was etched onto it, blood running down the side of its lips, meeting at its chin. Whatever this creature was, one thing that it was not was human. This creature caught Mr Baker's bloodshot eyes, however when he glanced in the direction; it was gone.

Something at the back of Mr Baker's mind was telling him to go, however he did not listen. This business opportunity was too hard to pass on. Spurred on by this thought, he decided to check out the bedrooms. Setting off for the room, Mr Baker reached the stairs, hesitantly, he took the first step. All his body weight being shared by his two feet. A quiet but audible creak was coming from them. Mr Baker's heart pumped faster. He took another step. Another creak. His heart racing even faster. All Mr Baker could hear was the steps or his heart. Nevertheless, he carried on. Creak. Thud. Creak. Thud. Creak. Thud. Screech. Mr Baker's head whipped around, his eyes scanning the surroundings to see what made this noise. His heart sounded like an engine, whirring in his ears. He

continued to try and find the source of the noise, but all he could see was the ominous yellow light. Flickering. Mr Baker ran up the next few steps and found the bedroom.

Right in the middle of the room hung a four-poster bed, its curtains were ripped and the wood was rotting. Its bedframe being taken over by bacteria and fungi. Mr Baker took some shaky steps towards the bed and peered down at the mattress. He gasped. Millions of molecules of oxygen escaping through his nostrils. The bed was stained red from blood and other bodily fluids. This was the last straw for Mr Baker. He screamed and bolted down the stairs, taking four steps at a time, when he finally reached the bottom, he tried to open the door. Shaking violently, he tried opening it. The door was locked shut, he tirelessly pulled, desperately trying to escape this hellhole. Finally, after many minutes of pulling, he gave up. Sliding down to the floor and sobbing. Mr Baker thought about his lonely life in his head and thought, 'Maybe I deserve this?' After a few minutes of sobbing, he pulled himself back together and went back to the bedroom.

Teary eyed, Mr Baker looked around the bedroom, familiarising himself with the house. He had given up all hopes to getting out. Aimlessly walking, he found himself at the dressing table. Glancing at the mirror, a single tear ran down his pale face, meeting at his chin, when it finally fell onto the threadbare carpet. He was defeated and looked like he had never slept in his life. His head was swarming with millions of thoughts, but he could not focus on one certain thing. Mr Baker was broken. For what felt like hours, Mr Baker finally stood up from the chair, he stumbled towards the vile bed, fell onto it, and closed his eyes for what felt like the last time.

Groggily, Mr Baker opened his eyes, he did not know how long he has been in this slumber for. He stumbled across the room to the window and wiped the dust off with his finger. A full moon hung across a pitch-black sky. Clouds dreamily floated in no particular place or direction. The stars gleamed. As if trying to convey a secret message. The moon emitted a tint of blue light across the luscious green grass, making it look almost purple. However, Mr Baker was ignoring all this, he was staring at a silhouette standing far, far away across the fields. He frantically tried to find something to get its attention with, but as soon as he looked back, it had gone. 'I probably imagined it' thought Mr Baker. However, little did he know, that creature lived in the house with him. Mr Baker knew that the only way he would be able to get out is to break the door down.

Mr Baker trundled down the stairs, trying to distract himself from the ominous noises from the stairs. Reaching the bottom of the stairs, Mr Baker steadied himself and advanced through the corridor, hoping that nothing happens to him when he advances down the corridor. Walking cautiously, Mr Baker's eyes met at a door at the end of the corridor. The door was once white; however, the paint has long peeled off and now all it shows was the rotting, brown wood. Mr Baker was slowly advancing towards the door. He was not a religious man; however, he was praying that there was nothing behind the door. Finally, he reached the door and pulled the rusty handle and peered inside.

The room was pitch black. Mr Baker blinked a few times so his eyes could adjust to the light. Slowly, he could make out a slimy flight of stairs, his eyes travelled further up in his sockets and he saw water dripping from the ceiling. Each droplet forming and falling down onto the stairs, where it reached the end of its life. Many things live a long life, especially water, however it seemed in this house; nothing seemed to stay alive for long. Mr Baker hesitated for a moment, thinking about whether he should go down this dark, dingy staircase. 'I have nothing to lose anymore' Thought Mr Baker. Mr Baker took a few cautious steps down the stairs. Mr Baker moved slow, for the stairs were very slippery and one wrong step could kill him. The droplet of water fell onto his face, and rolled into his mouth. A foul, rotten, revolting taste was given from it. Mr Baker hoped that whatever diseases the water had would not kill him. Ignoring the lingering taste in his mouth, Mr Baker carried on down the stairs. Reaching the bottom, Mr Baker examined the surroundings. The only thing he could see was a singular, bare lightbulb hanging on the ceiling. He searched around the walls for the light switch. After a few seconds of searching, he found it and turned it on.

A brilliant yellow light illuminated the room, causing Mr Baker to squint. He was surprised that there was electricity in this house, and a good stream of it too. Mr Baker adjusted to the light then examined the room. Many rows of shelves were across the sides of the room. On those shelves were hundreds of labelled jars were lined up next to each other. There was also something inside of them, so Mr Baker wanted a closer look. H walked to the nearest draw and recoiled in disgust. A singular, human eyeball floated in what looked like alcohol to preserve it. Calming himself, Mr Baker went to the other jar and saw a kidney instead. Mr Baker felt a shiver down his spine, he had never seen something so eerie and digesting in his life. Mr Baker did not know what to do, he just stood in the middle of the room. Not daring to make another move. Slowly, Mr Baker moved his head around and saw another door, leading to another room. Did he dare go into this room?

While he was pondering on this decision, a creature was travelling somewhere else in this house, hungry for blood, trying to catch its next victim. Mr Baker reached the decision that he should go in the other room. However, he needed a weapon. He searched around the room for something, but all he could find was a glass shard from the ground. 'This will have to do.' Mr Baker thought. Cautiously advancing towards the door, he was reaching his hand towards the handle. However, he hesitated. His mind was contradicting himself. Slowly he was retracting his hand from the handle, almost subconsciously. In spite of this, Mr Baker felt that something was whispering in his mind to go in. Almost like someone else was in his mind, controlling it. Trying to fight of the urge, he finally caved in, twisted the handle, and flung the door open.

A poorly lit blue room stood in front of Mr Baker. An object was in the middle of the room, but he could not make out what it was yet. Mr Baker was too scared that someone was with him. He strained his ears to find out if any other presence was around. Deadly silent. It did not phase Mr Baker though, he was satisfied and looked around the room. Finally making out what was perched in the middle of the room. Eyes widening in shock, chills started running down Mr Baker spine. An antique looking bloodstained operating chair was in front of his eyes. Mr Baker tried to take his eyes off it, but he could not. The same feeling of whispering in his mind came back and he had no other choice but to listen to the whispering. Step by step, Mr Baker took himself towards the chair, just like a moth to a light. But this time, the light was fire. Halfway across the room, Mr Baker heard a

loud slam, which made him break out of this trance like state. He whipped round his head and saw the door had been shut. An ugly, rusty padlock bolted the door so no one could go out. Or come in. Adrenaline rushed through Mr Baker's body, making his mind go on overdrive. Countless of thoughts rushed through his head. 'How did this happen?' 'Who did this?' 'Why me?' 'How can this be possible?' These were just some of the thoughts coming out of Mr Baker haywire brain. After a while the adrenaline stopped being produced. And just as fast as the door was slammed shut Mr Baker fell into that trance like state.

Edging close to the chair, Mr Baker started to sweat, however he could not stop himself from moving towards it. Finally, Mr Baker reached the chair. He finally cracked. Tears streamed down his puffy, red eyes. He was violently shaking and hoping this would not be the end for him. Mr Baker sat himself down on the chair and waited. Mr Baker kept drifting in and out of consciousness, he had not eaten or drank in two days. For what could have been hours, Mr Baker's ears picked up a sound. Something that sounded like a clanging of a metal was being emitted from his left. But he did not dare turn around. After a few minutes, the creature started to advance towards him. Mr Baker had to do something, however for some reason his body was not listening to him. Something else was coaxing him to stay in place. Mr Baker's eyes went crazy, as this was the only thing he could control. They were darting all over the place as a panic response to this situation. What Mr Baker did not notice however was the creature standing right on top of him. An impossibly pale- skinned face with two holes for a nose. Its eyes missing eyelids and a smile etched on with a knife. Mr Baker sensed its presence and stared it dead in the eyes. The whole eyeball was pitched black. Like the devil was here with him. Ready to take him to hell.

'Its time to play!' The creature said in a babyish voice, creeping out Mr Baker even more. All he did was shut his eyes as tightly as he could and hoped nothing would happen. The creature started talking again, in that childish voice, 'So young sir, first off I will be putting some needles in you and will be running some tests. I hope you do not resist!' Mr Baker did not move or even acknowledge that he understood the creature. Mr Baker opened his eyes a miniscule bit to see what was happening, he saw the creature shuffling around another table, and when it came back he saw its hands were full of needles and wires connected to machines. Quickly, he shut his eyes and hoped it did not hurt. Mr Baker could hear the creature edging close towards him. Mr Baker prepared himself, however that was not enough. Immense pain shot through his body like flaming hot lava was travelling through his veins, he screamed like he had never done before. He had never experienced this much pain in his life. Sweating, shaking and whimpering. He could hear faint breathing in his ear. The next second, the creature whispered, 'If you think this is bad, then you are in for a real treat.' It sinisterly chuckled and fell back into the shadows.

Mr Baker slowly closed his eyes again and started losing consciousness. Slowly, all his senses started to numb and he hoped this was all a dream. However, it was far from that. Waking up, he could hear his own breathing, this was the only thing he could focus on. His head was aching and he could not move his hands or legs. Drowsily he opened his eyes and jumped. Right in front of him, with that demonic smile and the jet-black eyes, was that creature. 'I see, you are finally awake.' Said the creature. Mr Baker spat out a series of offensive words and gestures out from his mouth, this is how he dealt with difficult customers. He just hoped this is how he could deal with this Thing. The

creature snarled, and before he knew it, he had a stinging red mark on the side of his face. He tried to bring up his hand to rub it, however it was bound tight by metal shackles. This must have happened when he was unconscious. 'You will pay for your actions.' Said the creature. Mr Baker thought this was ironic as the things he had done in his past do need repaying. He ran through his head the things the creature could do to him. But nothing could prepare him for what it said next. 'Its time to play!' The creature said in that sinister singsong voice again. 'Today we are playing, Five Finger Fillet!' Fear ran through Mr Baker, he knew exactly what this was, him and his friends used to play this all the time in school. However, with a pen. Not a knife.

'If you do not know the rules I will explain!' Sang the creature. Mr Baker sat quiet. 'Okay you are giving me the silent treatment. I will still explain it. Put your hand on the table, palm facing down. Spread your fingers as far as you can. In the gaps between your fingers, you will have to stab the table with the knife I give you. Slowly build up your speed until you cannot go any faster. You cannot stop until I tell you.' The creature added, 'Do not try anything stupid with the knife, you will pay. The creature went, presumably getting the things for the game. However scared Mr Baker was, he still had that arrogance inside of him. He was very good at this when he was in school, so he must be good at this now. The screech of wheels came from somewhere to his right, Mr Baker turned around and saw a massive cleaver with a pointed edge. He peered at the table and saw old red blood-stains that had not been cleaned. Mr Baker felt queasy. The creature said, 'I especially made this knife for this game, I hope you enjoy using this. I will give you one minute to prepare then you will start.' Mr Baker took the knife. He felt so powerful with this weapon in his hands, he was thinking about using it. But one glance at the creature made him think otherwise. The black, lifeless eyes staring into his soul. 'Time is up! Start playing.' Mr Baker was wondering how the time had gone so fast; however, he could not ponder on this for too long. He placed his left hand down and started playing.

One stab. Two stabs. Three stabs. Mr Baker had his own mind on the game, he had no room for error, one wrong move and he would be in unimaginable agony. For another 15 seconds he progressively got faster. Faster. Faster. He was going so fast, his hand was a blur, Mr Baker himself did not know how he was managing this. He felt elated, but this did not last long. At the back of his mind he knew, that one time he would mess up. He was carrying on, going as fast as his he can. However, this did not last long. Some black creature moved around near the corner of the room. This caught Mr Baker's eye. He thought in his mind, 'How is something else here, when this bloody creature is here.' This thought was short-lived, as this short lapse in concentration, was enough to send the knife right into the back of his hand. Mr Baker screamed in agony, the noise bouncing off the walls and being swallowed into the darkness of the night. Mr Baker right hand was still holding the knife. He let go and whispered profanities at the creature. Mr Baker had tears streaming down his eyes. Never had he experienced this much pain in his life. He looked up at the creature. Locking eyes with it. 'The game is not over yet.' Sang the creature. 'Carry on.'

'No- n- n- no please.' Begged Mr Baker. He was trying to keep consciousness, not letting the creature have the satisfaction of seeing him suffer. However, he was finding it harder and harder to do so. The creature was trying to tell him something, however Mr Baker could not hear it. More time passed, his vision was getting darker and darker. He could no longer feel his wounded, bloody hand. Just as he was about to drift off into the abyss. A sudden wave of energy and euphoria passed

through his body. It was as if someone had pressed a switch in his body to turn it back on. He looked around, forgetting where he was, it was as if he was drugged (which he probably was). All he saw was the knife and he started playing. Stab. Stab. Stab. Stab. It started again. The mesmerising pattern of the knife travelling across his fingers. The soft thump of the knife, meeting with the table. Everything seemed so calm for Mr Baker, he felt like he was back at school with his mates playing one of his favourite games. Except this time when he stabbed himself, the ink was red. After this, Mr Baker passed out.

When Mr Baker woke up, he saw that the creature was still waiting for him. 'Ready for the next game?' Sang the creature. Mr Baker was too tired to say anything. All that came out of his mouth was a low grumble. 'If you say so,' said the creature. The creature went to an adjacent room, presumably getting ready for the next game. Gradually, Mr Baker started to regain his senses. A few more minutes passed and the creature came back