

“Deep Memory”

It could not have been later than seven o'clock. If it had been, the little girl would have been put to bed already. But it must have been past dinnertime. She walked back and forth from the kitchen where her grandmother and mother stood by the sink washing and drying the dishes respectively, and the living room where the big kids sat playing a game too hard for her. Between the two was the dining room where her grandfather sat at the head of the massive wooden table reading the newspaper. Although his chair was perfectly sturdy he leaned heavily against the table's right edge. Having completed an article he lay the paper down, took off his reading glasses, and rested his eyes.

The little girl took a gamble and slowly approached Grandpa. He wasn't very fun, but maybe he'd want to play with her. “Grandpa” she squeaked. “Yes, Monkey?” he asked in his thick Transylvanian accent as he lifted her up and stuck her on his lap. In school a boy had told her that everyone from Transylvania was a vampire. She tried not to let this bother her. A smile came to her face, “Will you play with me? Everyone else is...” Her small voice trailed off as she slowly grabbed Grandpa's arm. “What's that?” She pointed to a dark black and bluish “88494” inked across the man's arm.

Grandpa stood up so quickly the little girl fell to the floor with a light thud. He looked her right in the eye as he barked into the kitchen, “Dinka, Sharon, put Teri to bed.” He stormed out the front door so quickly; it was as if something was chasing him.

Her eyes glued on the door, the little girl didn't even realize that she had been picked up and transported into the room that she shared with her sisters when they visited their grandparents. Mommy gave her a kiss on the forehead as she finished tucking her into bed. “Don't be upset with Grandpa,” she instructed. “There are just things he doesn't like to talk about. Don't ask him about the number again, some mean guys gave it to him before he moved to America. He doesn't like to be reminded of them. Okay?” The little girl nodded quietly. As Mommy turned off the light and closed the door, the little girl couldn't help but thinking: maybe the boy in her class was onto something. Maybe there were monsters in Transylvania that Grandpa was scared of. Maybe they lived under his bed, or in his closet. Maybe vampires were real.

Discussion Questions:

1. Sum up this story in one word.
2. Why do you think the author wrote this piece?
3. Does this story bring up any stories for you? What did it make you think of?
4. What questions do you still have about this piece?