

## The Phantoms of Light and Darkness

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Long ago in age of superstition and ritual practices, there lived two brothers Samuel and Fredrick who were identical twins. Losing their mother and father to scarlet fever at a young age, the two boys were sent to live with their grandmother, Miriam, the local physic or what was known back then as a spirit talker. People from all over would come to see her and ask to speak to a loved one who was no longer with them. Kings and peasants would speak of how powerful Miriam was and how some thought she had made a pact with the Devil to obtain her physic ability. Years passed, and the boys learned that they two had the power to speak to spirits and that their power was as strong if not stronger than Miriam's. Samuel and Fredrick could not only speak to spirits but could also open themselves up to let spirits talk through them. As Christianity started becoming more of a staple in the village, the villagers began to shun the old ways. Once word got out of Samuel and Fredrick's power, the villagers stopped seeing Miriam and the boys fearing that they practiced witchcraft and worshipped the devil.

Living in the village became very difficult for Samuel, Fredrick and Miriam. They had no money because people stopped seeing them and even if they had money no one in the village would do business or have anything to do with them. Miriam tried everything she could to get people to trust that she was not a servant of the devil but any time she would approach a villager they would either run away or throw rocks at her. This angered Frederick and made him very bitter towards the villagers. Samuel on the other hand mostly felt sorry for the villagers for them not being able to understand that it was not by their choice that it just happened and that if the villagers could experience the gift they would see that it was not an evil power bestowed by the devil but a beautiful power given from God up above. As weeks turned to months the boys were trying everything they could to keep their grandmother and themselves from starving to death. They would hunt and fish as best as they could but mostly they lived off of wild berries growing in the forest.

Every year the village would hold a giant feast in preparation for the Great Harvest, in which the village would gather their crops for the coming winter. Normally the mayor would request Miriam to say a blessing to the spirits for a good harvest, but this year as Miriam and the boys approached the festivities they were greeted with looks of disgust and villagers yelling "The Devil Is in Our Midst". The mayor approached both Miriam and the boys and stated they were

not welcome. This made Frederick furious to the point he struck the mayor. They were instantly arrested and sentenced to death that very night.

Before they were put to death, the boys were tortured while Miriam was forced to watch. First, they were dunked repeatedly in water and at some points left under for long periods of time, all the while the village priest demanding them to confess their sins. Next the villagers shackled Samuel and Frederick to two gigantic oak trees. While hanging from the trees, the boys received bone shattering blows from an iron rod wielded by Ivan the village strongman and appointed law officer. Lastly, as their bodies hung limp and bloody a man with a black mask approached each of them and began cutting their eyelids off forcing their eyes open. Screaming with pain and agony at the sight of her two mangled grandsons Miriam began to shout curses of vengeance on all the villagers stating that her boys would come back and punish all who lived in the village for all time. At that point, the black hooded man approached Miriam and brought her over to Samuel and Frederick she kissed their bloody cheeks and said, "You will have vengeance", and with their eyes forced open they witnessed the hooded man slice their grandmothers' throat from ear to ear. As her body hit the ground, the mayor ran to Frederick and stabbed him in the chest killing him instantly. All alone bloody and mangled Samuel, with last bit of life he had looked up at the rising sun and at the villagers and screamed, "You will never be safe, whether be light or dark, you will never be safe", and with that said he lowered his head and died.

A few weeks went by with no disturbance. The villagers felt they were justified in what they did and went about with their lives as if nothing happened. Until one night two men were found dead, disemboweled, eyelids removed and shackled to the very same oak tree that Samuel and Frederick were shackled too. Upon closer observation, it was clear to see it was the mayor and Ivan. While the villagers were taking the corpses off the trees, some of the villagers saw a dark figure with yellow eyes perched high on one of the trees, and as quickly as the figure was seen, it vanished. This caused panic in the village. Some believed it was the vengeful spirit of the boys. Most believed it was a murderer in the village, but those doubts were put to rest the next morning when a man was found hanging from a tree dead. His legs and arms were ripped off and scattered all over the bloody ground. When the villagers approached the hanging corpse, they noticed looming above him was a white demonic figure with fiery red eyes, and gripped tightly in his hand was a bloody black mask. As the villagers began their screams of terror, the white demon staring at the bloody ground began speaking the words "You will never be safe, whether be light or dark, you will never be safe".

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