

The Secrets of Maris Foster

Maris Foster was an everyday girl. However, she had a secret. It was a beastly secret. I know, because I was her best friend in seventh grade. This is how I remember finding out my friend's darkest, hidden quality.

One afternoon, we were at cheer practice. We could feel a tension brewing all day, and as the practice started, a thunderstorm erupted. We were told to head inside the gym, but I noticed Maris went in a different direction. I followed her. I made sure she didn't see me, and to my surprise, she headed for the old clock tower. I could faintly see a strange man looking for something, or someone. He resembled someone that I'd seen before, but I couldn't place him.

He spoke in a deep voice, "Maris Foster, I believe."

Maris replied with confidence, "Yes. That's me."

The strange man whispered into Maris' ear. I had to find out what this was about and who this man was, but I didn't want to expose that I had been following Maris. It was clear that Maris had the information she wanted from the man, as she immediately left and headed towards the gym. I scurried ahead of her so she was unaware of my covert participation of her secret meeting.

I felt anxious and wanted to share what I had seen. Yet I couldn't. After all, this was Maris' secret. During the practice, Maris looked nervous. She was a little jumpy and not focused on the practice. I waited for her after the session, but she left in a hurry and I didn't see her again until the next day at school.

A week went by without event. Maris behaved normally and I thought less and less about the secret meeting.

However, at the next cheer practice, I noticed Maris ducking around the gym towards the clock tower again. So I followed her. The man was there, but this time he looked different. He was wearing

something strange, something ominous. He had a black cloak with purple marbling. Maris seemed stunned by his new appearance. But she was clearly impressed by the image and was focused on him as they approached one another. He stood still for a moment and asked, “Are you sure you want to do this, Maris?”

She replied, “Yes. I am sure.”

The man lifted his outstretched arm and pointed his index finger directly at Maris’s torso. All at once, a purple beam struck her rib cage, lifting her into the air with ease. She floated, arms stretched, head tilting backward with her eyes open. After less than a minute, she fell to the floor with a thud. I was astonished. I wanted to run and see if Maris was suffering. Slowly she recovered to standing position. She cried out, “Make it stop! Make it stop!” Her face was tight with pain and I could see her hair, her ears, her face were being transfigured into a dark, black beast. Her whole body was becoming covered with black skin, with purple shading. I couldn’t control myself, I screamed, “Maris!” The man and Maris turned and glared at me. Instinctively, I knew I had to get away.

I sprinted to the gym and tried to focus on our practice, but I just couldn’t. I was playing back in my head what just happened. Something bothered me about the strange man. Then it hit me, he reminded me of Haiden, Maris’ boyfriend. Could it have been Haiden? He’s so handsome, nice and sweet. Maybe it was his father.

After the laser beam incident, Maris was not herself. Sure, she had resumed the appearance of her usual self, but she was different. I could never find her at lunch. And at every free period, I’d look for her in her favorite spot, the theater. But she wasn’t there. I was getting really worried. I just had to tell someone about it.