

13 Karma Lane

Again, she awoke to a blood-curdling scream. She didn't know if it was the familiar sound in her repetitive dream or if it came from her. What she did know was that the same address flashed in her mind, night after night. Why was 13 Karma Lane the only thing she could recall from the recurrent nightmare that had begun to plague her night after night.

Lauren reached over and flipped open her laptop. With the glow from the computer illuminating her face, she began searching for an answer. She was going to find out why 13 Karma Lane kept creeping into her dreams. The first hit showed an address in Maine, the birthplace of her family for many generations. The photo of the old mansion that popped up seemed vaguely familiar to her but she could not recall why.

It was Saturday morning and the sunlight beamed through her open window. Lauren rolled out of bed, started the coffee pot, took a hot shower, and packed a suitcase. A road trip to satisfy her curiosity was on the menu. Besides, it was a good excuse to visit her family while she was in town.

With the old Volkswagen sputtering up the hills and her arm stretched out the window feeling the cool, moist air, an uncomfortable feeling overcame her. She could not shake it. It was something in the pit of her stomach that kept gnawing at her conscience. She shook it off and attributed it to nerves but could not help but notice the sudden ice-cold chill that seemed to envelope the car and the goose bumps that appeared on her skin.

As she drove up the coast, dense fog began to roll in. One hundred and thirteen miles later, she saw the sign: Welcome to Maine. With only a few more miles until she reached her mother's home, she decided to swing by 13 Karma Lane just to take a quick look at the place that seemed to be calling her to its location.

She entered the address on her mapping app on her phone and was on her way. The thick fog and darkness made it difficult to see the street signs but at last, there it was: Karma Lane. As soon as she turned, she saw a yellow glow on the right side of the street. The fog gently moved away from the object, revealing a large yellow sign that read "Dead End Street". She laughed, remembering how she had seen that sign before by a trailer park for senior citizens and thinking that the sign was kind of a sick joke to put in front of a retirement community. But here was the sign, in the middle of nowhere.



The lights on the old VW began dimming and the old '69 engine began to cut out and eventually slowed and silenced. As she coasted to the side of the street, she noticed the large old mansion that she had seen on her computer screen. She had arrived.



She wiped the fog off inside of the windshield with the sleeve of her sweater and looked out at the darkness. The outlines of the old mansion were dark against the moonlit fog. She picked up her phone from the passenger seat to call her mom but it was dead; just like everything else appeared on this road. The trees, foliage, everything around was dry and withered. Getting out of the car, she sat on the front bumper and took a sip of her coffee.

That's when she noticed a misty light in the cupola on top of the mansion and the outline of a woman looking off into the distance toward the ocean. Mesmerized by what she saw, she approached the house. The leaves crunched under her boots on the stone walkway and she began to hear a very slight musical sound. As she approached the front door, it became louder and she noticed that it was the same song that she used to play on her music box when she was a child. It was as if the house was luring her in.

Lauren hit the flashlight app on her phone and knocked on the heavy wooden door. With no answer and nowhere to go, she turned the cold metal handle and peered in. As the door creaked open, a vision flashed in her mind. She recognized the scene but it appeared so old, so dilapidated. As she panned the light around the living room, the bright glow from a mirror momentarily blinded her. When she regained her vision, standing before her was a woman with long blonde hair pinned up in a feminine, old-fashioned style. Her long flowing dress blew in the wind despite the stillness of the room. Lauren could smell her perfume and sense her sorrow. And as Lauren approached the woman, her image faded and drifted up the stairs.



Feeling compelled, she followed the woman upstairs and into one of the many bedrooms that lined the hallway. As she entered the room, she saw a sledge hammer on the floor, surrounded by blood. It disappeared as quickly as it came. The vision caused a sudden headache as Lauren grasped her head and closed her eyes. As she backed out of the room, she saw the woman going up yet another set of stairs to the top of the mansion. Lauren ran toward the woman and found herself at an opening to the cupola. She climbed the stairs and looked out over the ocean. Flashes of visions began tormenting her with things she did not remember but that seemed familiar in some strange way.

Lauren looked out toward the ocean and through the thick fog, she saw something out in the darkness on the water and heard the sound of a ship's horn. The woman in the long dress reappeared beside her and began telling Lauren that the man she loved was finally coming home. He had been at sea and would be arriving home soon. She showed Lauren a photo of her fiancé in an old gold frame. As Lauren looked at the man in the photo, her heart began to pound and she fell to her knees. Just like a dream, the vision of this man sparked a movie in her head that flashed scene by scene in black and white.

Lauren realized that this man was someone that she once loved. But how was this possible? Lauren had never been engaged and had not had a relationship with this man in the photo, yet the memories and familiarity of him began to flood her mind. She could smell his scent and remember the touch of his hand on her face.

She ran down the stairs and toward the door and then heard someone walking up the walkway. The crunching of the leaves got louder and louder. She hid in the closet and peered out the door that she left ajar. As the front door opened, she saw that it was the man in the photo; the man in her dreams; the man who remained in her heart.

As if she were watching something occur in a dream, she saw the woman in the long dress run to the door to greet him. Lauren stood in the closet, watching the man she loved embracing another woman. There was something in Lauren's hand. Something wooden and heavy. Something in the closet that she had grasped on to as she stood in the darkness.

The couple walked up the long stairway to one of the bedrooms. Lauren crept out from behind the door and took with her the sledgehammer that was locked in her grip. As she passed a large ornate mirror, Lauren looked at her reflection in the mirror; but did not recognize herself. She knew it must be her but the reflection was a woman dressed in clothing from a time long ago, curls cascading on her shoulders, and a broche at her neck. Nothing about the reflection was correct, except for the sledgehammer that she carried in her hands.

She refocused her attention to the couple upstairs. What was happening? Why was the man she loved with that other woman? The pain she felt enraged her. She crept up the stairs and peered through a crack in the door. She quietly crept up to the bed where the couple were making love in the darkness. She raised the sledgehammer over her head and repeatedly slammed it into their skulls, causing blood to spatter on the walls and the sound of the cracking of their skulls to echo in her head.

Lauren stood there with blood dripping down her arms and her body shaking violently. And just as quickly as it all had happened, it disappeared. Lauren looked down at her clothing and the blood was gone along with the sledgehammer and the bodies. She stood alone in the room with nothing but the moonlight coming in from the nearby window.

As she walked down the stairs, her knees shaking and numb with fear, she grasped the handrail and stopped in the middle of the stairs. Visions of newspaper headlines from long ago and photos of a gruesome murder scene flooded her mind. When her knees buckled, she rolled down the stairs until she hit the floor.

When she awoke, she saw the man and the woman standing over her. He told her a story from long ago.

It was 1913 and he had been in love with both women but neither of the women knew of each other. He had to make a choice and he had chosen the other woman. Enraged with anger, Lauren had broken into the home and bludgeoned both of them in their bedroom. She had ended their lives and now karma was going to rear its head and Lauren would now pay for what she had done.

As Lauren struggled to escape, she collapsed and the cold steel of a sledgehammer came crashing down on her skull, spattering blood and scattering chunks of brain

material throughout the room. The music from her childhood music box began to echo throughout the stone walls and she began to lose consciousness. Her mind became trapped in visions of the past and the old black and white movie that played out in her thoughts. Her pulse became weak, her heartbeat began to slow, and she began to fade. The last thing that her conscious mind remembered was how something she had done a time long ago, in a different world, in a different life, had come back to claim her at 13 Karma Lane.

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