

## The House

SNAP!

I winced, wondering if anyone heard me. I scanned the broken twig beneath my foot, and then the landscape around me. I breathed a sigh of relief. The mist didn't help but I could still make out shapes of leaf-less trees hiding my prize. An old abandoned house, its gutter had snapped off and been buried in the undergrowth, shattered windows sat on once painted window ledges, the decayed and hazardous door frame didn't possess a door. But I didn't care.

As I approached it a deep growl whispered from the darkness of the hall. I didn't make any sudden movements; instead I very slowly dropped to my knees and pulled a chicken leg from my black waterproof coat pocket fastened with a button. Almost immediately the growling stopped and a grey fuzzy snout poked out of the hall. Then a head with a pair of set-in yellow eyes came out into the daylight; shortly followed by a body, legs and tail, completing a scruffy grey dog. It took one look at me and bounded forwards, stopping short and sitting upright. I gave it the chicken leg stroking it as it ate.

I stood up and looked the house up and down, considering how I would approach. When I finally made up my mind, I continued. Then I came to three muddy steps leading to a tatty door mat. Firstly looking back at the dog before proceeding up the steps, a deep breath escaped my frozen lips, warming them a little. I walked inside meeting a red carpeted staircase, thick dust settling on its bannister. Then I placed one foot on the stair and a hiss came from behind me. I thrust my hand into my pocket and removed from it a cheap box of matches; I took one and struck it. The flame danced on the wooden stick and raced to burn my fingers. For a short period of time it illuminated my surroundings showing a very skinny black cat with leaves and solid lumps of mud and sticks stuck to its fur. It arched its back and showed me its teeth.

I finally turned back around, relieved again. I then started up the long and winding spiral staircase, accompanied by the black feline. When we got to the top I confidently strode into the room in front of me and sat down, I allowed the fuzzy black cat onto my lap and gazed out of the window. Anyone could tell that behind my sapphire blue eyes I had secrets; I was brought to my attention with shouts and screams, then I realized: my past had caught up with me, and I must leave now.

**Primary – First Prize**

**Emma Hawke – Cronk-y-Berry Primary School**