

Vampire

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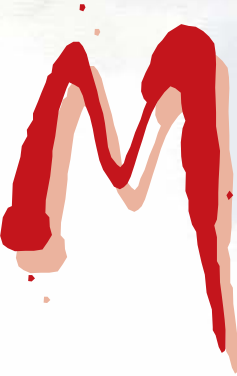


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by J.D. Lara



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Marco never thought a vampire legend his grandfather spoke of was nothing more than foolish mumbo jumbo, out of the mouth of a drunken old man. Marco's Grandfather was known far and wide for getting drunk, then talking about vampires, ghost and crap no one else could ever believe...




The vampire legend his grandfather ranted about made Marco's stoned out friends laugh at just the mention of his name. Marco was ashamed, but to not let on, he joined in the laughter. Now that Marco's grandfather is gone, and he is older, he feels bad that he did not at least stick up for his old grandfather. Marco wished he had not invited his so called friends over just to make fun of him. All of those so called "friends" that later became mortal enemies. Marco felt he should have been more supportive of his poor grandfather not just because of whom he was, but because Marco knew all along that what his grandfather ranted and raved about was very real. What his stoned out friends thought was so funny, would turn out badly for them. So many would die, some would not, which was worse for everyone else.


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Marco should have listened to his grandfather, Flujencio Armando Castro more. Grandpa was no drunken old fool after all. Grandpa knew thing not many people could believe. Most, by the time they believed, they were dead. Sir Castro lived to tell his story He warned the ones he loved, then everyone within an earshot. Not many listened. Marco's grandfather deserved his respect if not his love. Marco should have listened.






Marco didn't have many friends growing up. Everyone he came in contact with ended up not liking him or screwing him over. He could never "click" with anyone. Regarded as the "odd ball" or referred to as that "strange guy" Marco kept to himself,



read allot, and for some strange reason, loved being in the dark. He was the type that would sit in the back of the room, back of the class always. It seemed he sought darkness or was always seen in the darkest areas. It was strange, Marco was always in darkness. Maybe it was darkness that was on Marco. If you ever saw him out, it was at the movies leaving the theater late at night. Sometimes you would see him walking dark roads or sitting at a bus stop, at a dark corner of town. Marco was darkness.



Born and raised in Miami, Marco did not identify much with his family's culture. His Mom was born in New York, her parents were from Cuba, and she was raised in Miami. Marco

Vampire
1.0



was told his Dad died when he was young so he had no memory of him at all. No one ever spoke about him despite Marco's questions about his father from time to time. Abuelo Castro gave Marco his last name in the absence of his father. A Spaniard born at the Spanish embassy in Cuba, Señor Castro was once a highly respected scholar and investigator said to have been considered for embassy appointment then for gov-

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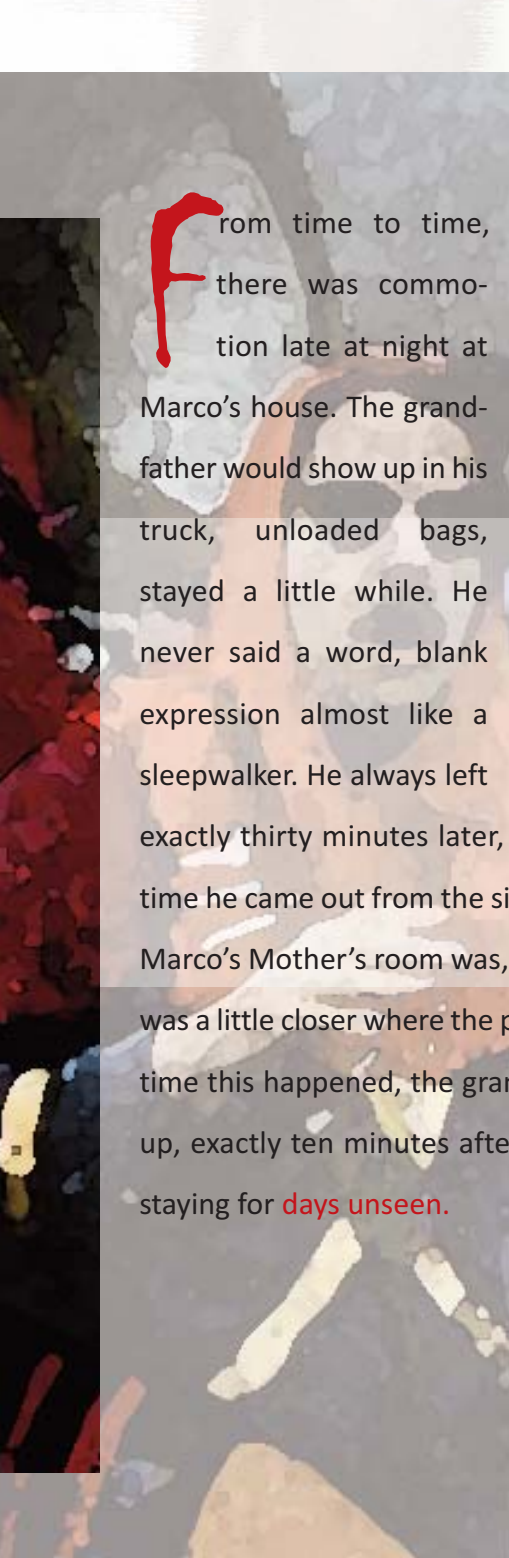
ernment positions in Cuba. Sr Castro never liked the powers in charge, felt they were all corrupt, so he always dismissed the overtures, obsessed by the science and nature of his work. His obsession was fueled by the need to know answers to what he had witnessed but could not understand or explain. His dark obsession was very close to him.

Marco's Grandmother was a strange old woman also who terrified everyone that came in contact with her.. Mostly speaking in spanish, she was not from Cuba or Spain or any other Latin country, noticable because of her accent. It was different, it did not have that distinct latin twang, despite being gramatically perfect. Marco's Grandmoter was gypsy, "La Gitana" as she was called her was a mean, nasty woman. It was said she spoke something like eight languages, but you would never know because she treated Marco's family like property, insulting and constantly dogging them in spanish and probably all the other languages she spoke. La Gitana was constantly

mumbling and would go into trances like if she was on some type of hallucinogenic drug or was possessed.

Marco knew his grandmother hated him since he was little, but did not know why. Marco's Mom was kind of a party girl, Marco was more of a little brother to her than her son. She brought different men over to their house as long as Marco could remember. She was always high, drunk or in "pursuit there of" as she loved to say. Early on, Marco had to hide in his room to not hear his Mom and her friend of the day or night.





From time to time, there was commotion late at night at Marco's house. The grandfather would show up in his truck, unloaded bags, stayed a little while. He never said a word, blank expression almost like a sleepwalker. He always left exactly thirty minutes later, bags full. Most of the time he came out from the side of the house where Marco's Mother's room was, it had a side door that was a little closer where the parked truck was. Every time this happened, the grandmother would show up, exactly ten minutes after the grandfather left, staying for **days unseen.**



Marco would not see his Mom for weeks at a time. She was never involved in his day to day life...

Darkness runs deep in Marco.

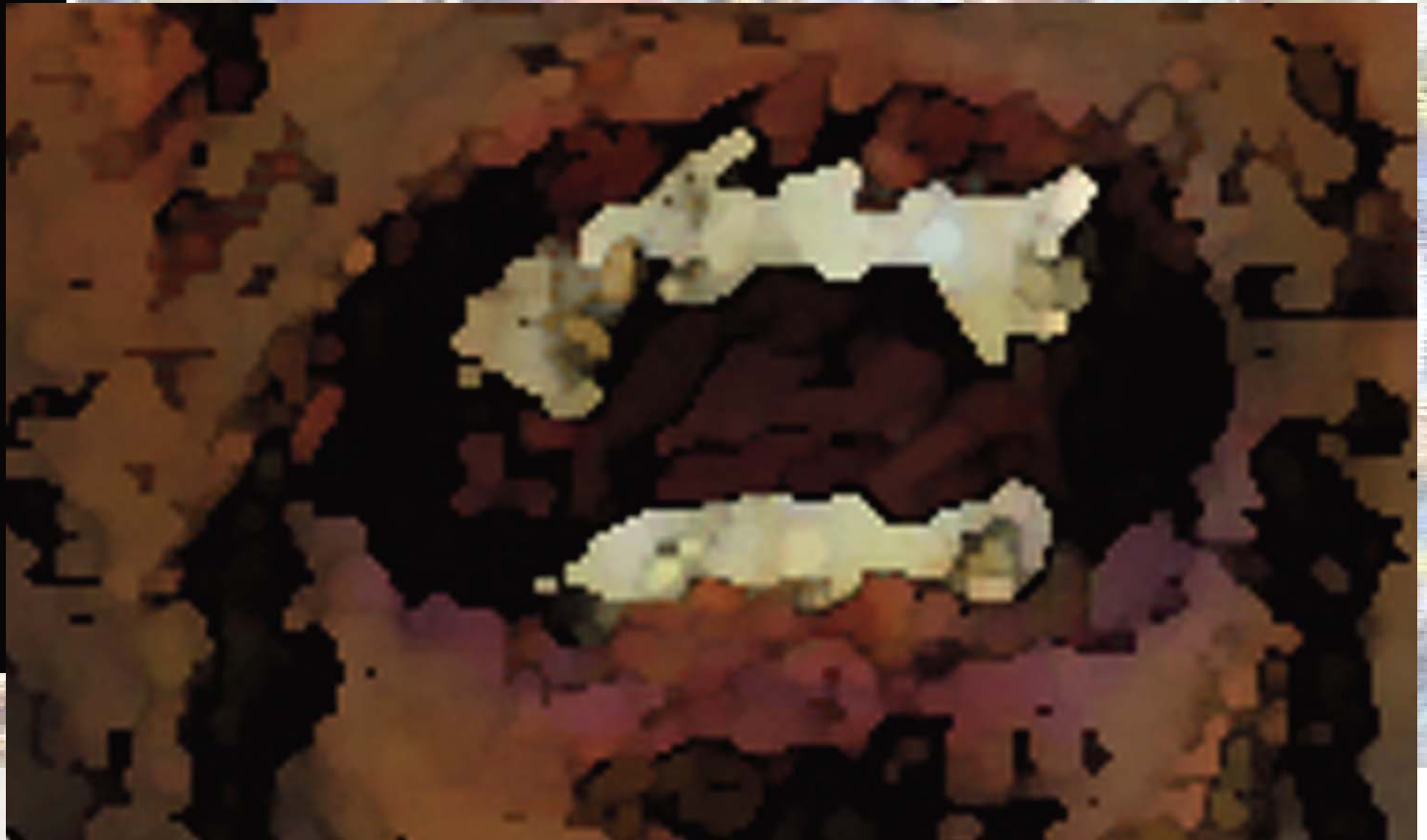
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ToMocun³

Old man Castro obsessed over something he called "ToMocun". pronounced "TO", like it TOfal, "Mo" like in MOw, "Cun" as in "RaCOON". Castro lost everything all credibility, deemed a fool by the same circles that courted and lauded over a few years earlier. Sr. Castro himself, in many way, thought he had lost his mind, many times. Steadfast to the end, he trusted the science and knowledge he collected and warned of all. Too many would not listen. Too many would die.

Tomocun, is said wore a dark hood and no one ever saw his face. The legend said he stole children that would wander off, never to be seen or heard from again. It became lore parents would tell their children to

keep their children close by and would fear wandering off. The reality is that there is so much more to Tomocun. Truth was Tomocun had no preference. Everyone was game. No remains were ever found. The legend said, ToMocun snatched children, put



them in a sack and would disappear into the night.
In reality, ToMocun was much worse and would
turn out to be more than Marco ever wanted to

believe and the key to discovering who he really
was, or what he really was.

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