

## RELIEF – A TRUE FAIRY TALE

### A Short Story by Christine Gillam

Once upon a time there was a happy little girl. She played make believe with her dolls, had lots of friends and didn't have a care in the world. She had a wonderful family who loved her.

Then one day, something happened. A monster came into her life. A big and scary monster. It came and left without warning. She never knew when it would come to terrorize her. Sometimes it would come when she was out playing with her friends. Sometimes when she was sleeping. Sometimes when she was doing her homework or reading. She became very afraid. She began to sleep with a baseball bat beside her bed, just in case. She began to stay inside more during the day, away from her friends for fear it might come after them too. She began to turn inward, not trusting anyone or anything. It became easy for her to stay inside herself, daydreaming that she was far away and alone.

As she got older, she stayed away from her house more. It seemed that the monster could only get to her when she was near her home. By doing this, she went for longer periods of time without seeing it. It seemed that the monster could only get her when she was near her home.

She got married and left her family there alone with the monster. Her mother told her it was ok, that she couldn't see the monster and wasn't afraid. But one day it got too much for her mother and she went far, far away. The girl knew then that her mother had been lying all along. She had seen the monster and she was afraid. This made the girl sad. She loved her mother very much and now she wouldn't be able to see her.

With her mother gone, the monster hunted down the girl and began to terrorize her again. It came to the place she worked, to her home, found her in stores. She begged it to stay away from her, to forget about her. After a while, it did begin to stay away, but she was always waiting for it to come back. She had a child and constantly feared for his safety. Would the monster come and take her baby? Would it begin to scare him as it had scared her all her life? Each day she lived in fear of the return of the monster.

Then one day she received word that the monster had died. Twenty years had passed since the last time she had actually seen the monster. Everyone expected her to feel grief and pain at its passing. All she felt was relief. Relief that she would be able to send her son to school or to a friend's house without fearing she would never see him again. Relief that she could go to public places and to work without worrying about seeing the monster. Relief that she could answer the phone without it being on the other end of the line.

People she had know all her life started coming up to her telling her how sorry they were. She did what she was supposed to do. She thanked them and kept on with her life, not revealing to them the weight that had been lifted from her. She had one more thing to do and it would be all over.

## The Funeral.

People who knew the monster were there and kept coming to her, apologizing for her loss, offering their help, if she needed it. She wondered, where were they all my life when the monster was here? They had to know. They had to have realized what it was like for her.

The preacher stood there and spouted off kind words about things the monster had done in its life. "Everyone makes mistakes" he said. She bit her tongue and did her duty. In less than an hour, it was over. She was finally free. It was an overwhelming feeling. She got into her car and drove away. Leaving the monster that was her father to rest in peace.