

The Timeless Weaver

The Timeless Treasures carnival, an annual spectacle unlike any other, was a haven of unique handmade jewellery, pottery, and textiles. The air was a symphony of scents, from the inviting aroma of fresh bread to the exotic cedar spices and the earthy fragrance of leather goods. The laughter of children echoed through the stalls, and the lively tunes of the musicians added a touch of magic to the festive atmosphere.

Nancy, her eyes wide with wonder, meandered through the carnival. She was drawn to a pottery stall, her gaze captivated by the exquisite craftsmanship of a set of hand-painted bowls. The potter, a jovial man with a bushy beard, noticed her interest and struck up a conversation.

"These are beautiful," Nancy said, running her fingers over the smooth surface of a shallow dish.

"Thank you," the potter replied with a smile. "Each piece is unique, just like the people who make them."

Nancy nodded, appreciating the sentiment. She moved on, stopping next at a jewellery stall where a young woman demonstrated how to make intricate bracelets from silver wire. Nancy watched, fascinated by the skill and precision required.

As she continued her exploration, Nancy overheard snippets of conversation from other carnival goers. There were mutterings about a mysterious weaver whose tent was unlike any other. Intrigued, Nancy decided to seek out this enigmatic figure.

Among the bustling crowd, a small, unassuming tent caught her eye. It was adorned with intricate tapestries that seemed to shimmer with an otherworldly glow, illuminated by the soft, warm light of gas lamps and the occasional flicker of candles.

The tent stood apart, almost concealed in a captivating air of quiet mystery.

Inside the tent, an elderly woman sat at a loom, her fingers deftly weaving threads of copper and gold. Her name was Eliza, and she was known for her exquisite craftsmanship. However, there was something peculiar about her presence. She never spoke, and those who tried to engage her in conversation were met with a cold, distant gaze, adding to the intrigue that shrouded her.

Nancy hesitated at the entrance, feeling a strange curiosity and apprehension. She took a deep breath and stepped inside. The air was thick with an eerie silence, broken only by the rhythmic clatter of the loom, which was powered by a small, hissing steam engine.

The candles emitted a strangely hypnotic fragrance, a blend of smoky cedarwood and patchouli with an undertone of something almost metallic. The scent lingered in the air, evoking a sense of ancient rituals and forgotten memories.

"Hello," Nancy greeted softly, but Eliza did not respond. Instead, she continued to weave, her eyes fixed on the tapestry before her. Nancy stepped closer, mesmerised by the intricate patterns forming under Eliza's hands. The tapestry depicted scenes of a bygone era, with figures dancing in the moonlight, their forms only revealed by the glow of the lamps and the occasional spark from the crude metal contraption at the weaver's feet.

“Excuse me,” Nancy tried again, “your work is incredible. How do you create such detailed designs?”

Eliza paused, her fingers stilling on the loom. She looked up, her eyes locking onto Nancy’s.

“Do you believe in what you cannot see?” she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

Nancy hesitated, then nodded. “I suppose I do.”

Eliza smiled faintly, her eyes reflecting a distant misery. “These threads hold more than just patterns,” she uttered cryptically. “They hold stories, memories... souls.”

Nancy’s spine tingled as a cold wave of fear washed over her. Her voice quivered, barely above a murmur, “What do you mean?”

Eliza’s gaze grew more intense. “The past is never truly gone,” she said softly. “It lingers, woven into the fabric of our lives. Some spirits are bound to their creations, unable to move on.”

As Eliza spoke, the figures in the tapestry began to stir. The delicate threads shimmered, their spectral forms moving gracefully across the fabric. Nancy watched in awe, unable to tear her eyes away. The figures danced and twirled, their movements fluid and hauntingly alluring, as if they were performing a silent ballet.

“These spirits seek recognition,” Eliza continued in a hushed tone that seemed to echo in the tent’s stillness. They want their stories to be remembered, their art to be cherished.”

Nancy felt a strange connection to the tapestry, as if the spirits were reaching out to her, their ethereal hands brushing against her soul. She shivered, not from cold but from the profound longing and sadness of the fabric. “What can I do to help them?” she asked, her voice trembling with fear and fascination.

Eliza’s gaze darkened, her eyes taking on a shadowy depth. “Share their stories. Let the world know of their existence. Only then can they find peace. But beware,” she added, her voice growing more ominous, “not all spirits are benevolent. Some are bound by anger and sorrow and will stop at nothing to be heard.”

Nancy swallowed hard, the weight of what Eliza had said settling heavily on her shoulders. She glanced back at the tapestry, where the figures continued their silent movements, their expressions showing glimpses of hope and despair.

By taking on this task, she knew she was stepping into a world where the line between the living and the dead was perilously thin. But she also felt a deep sense of duty, a calling to give expression to the forgotten souls woven into the fabric of history.

Nancy left the carnival with a heavy heart, the conversation with Eliza lingering in her mind. As she walked through the streets of Coledge, the evening mist began to roll in, wrapping the town in a wispy veil. She clutched the small tapestry she had purchased from Eliza’s tent, its intricate patterns now seeming to pulse with their own life.

When Nancy finally arrived home, she felt an uneasy chill. She placed the tapestry on her worktable and lit a few oil lamps, their warm glow casting flickering shadows on the walls. She couldn’t shake the feeling that she was being watched.

Determined to honour the spirits' stories, Nancy sketched the designs she had seen in Eliza's tent. As her pencil moved across the paper, she felt a strange energy guiding her hand. The sketches came to life with an eerie precision, each line and curve capturing the essence of the unforgettable figures.

Hours passed, and the house became colder. Nancy's eyelids grew heavy, and she retired for the night. She placed the tapestry on a chair by her bed and climbed under the covers, hoping for a restful sleep.

But as the clock struck three, Nancy was jolted awake by an unfamiliar sound. She sat up, her heart pounding, and saw the tapestry glowing faintly in the darkness. The figures were moving again, their forms more vivid and defined than before. They seemed to be reaching out to her, their expressions desperate and pleading.

"Nancy," a voice reverberated through the room, chilling her to the bone. "Help us"

Nancy's breath caught in her throat. She knew she had to do something, but fear paralysed her. Gathering her courage, she reached out and touched the tapestry. The moment her fingers brushed the fabric, a surge of energy coursed through her, and she was pulled into a vision.

She found herself standing in a dimly lit workshop, surrounded by the spirits of the artisans. They were hard at work, their quiet hands crafting beautiful art pieces. But there was a palpable sadness and a longing for recognition and peace.

One spirit, a young woman with desolate eyes, stepped forward. "We are trapped," she said, her voice filled with anguish. "Our souls are bound to our creations, unable to move on. You must tell our stories and share our art with the world. Only then can we find rest."

Nancy nodded, tears streaming down her face. "I will," she promised. "I will make sure your stories are heard."

The vision faded, and Nancy was back in her bedroom, the tapestry now lying still and silent. She knew what she had to do.

The following day, Nancy returned to the carnival, eager to see Eliza again. She needed to talk with her about what had happened last night and get more advice from the wise weaver.

But when she reached the tent, it was empty. The loom was gone, and the tapestries had vanished. Confused, Nancy asked the other traders about Eliza, but no one remembered her.

"Are you sure there wasn't a weaver here?" Nancy asked a nearby Artist.

The Artist frowned. "I don't recall anyone like that. Maybe you were dreaming?"

Determined to uncover the truth, Nancy delved into the carnival's history. She discovered that a talented weaver named Eliza had been a regular at the carnival many years ago. However, she passed away under mysterious circumstances, leaving behind a legacy of beautiful work.

Realising that she had encountered the spirit of Eliza, Nancy felt a deep sense of responsibility.

Over the next few weeks, she dedicated herself to creating a series of artworks inspired by the spirits' stories. She held exhibitions, wrote articles, and shared the tales of the forgotten artisans with anyone who would listen.

As Nancy's work gained recognition, the whispers and strange occurrences in her home gradually decreased.

She thought, " Maybe the spirits are finally being acknowledged and remembered and are beginning to find peace."

But as Nancy's fame grew, so did the matter of strange occurrences. Visitors to her studio reported seeing shadowy figures and hearing disembodied voices. Nancy began to experience unsettling dreams filled with the anguished cries of the spirits she had vowed to help.

One night, as Nancy worked late into the evening, she felt a cold hand on her shoulder. She turned to find Eliza standing behind her, eyes glowing with an eerie light. "You have done well," Eliza said, her voice echoing sinisterly. "But remember, the spirits are never truly at rest. They will always seek more."