

Midnight

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A BELLOWING, POWERFUL ROAR quaked the Prospect Park neighborhood of Brooklyn with a thundering so wild that Pearl Twist's sleeping body jerked and quivered. Moments earlier, she had been snoring piglet-like snorts, resting peacefully, dead to the world.

Stunned, Pearl clutched the bedpost as the booming rumble echoed in her ears. Paintings adorning the walls tilted and swayed, then dropped off their hooks, as she witnessed her cherished Victorian dollhouse comically wobble and walk inches across the rug as if it had miniature legs.

Pearl's bare feet landed on the cold, parquet floorboards. Placing a hand over her thumping heart, she felt the almighty roar in her chest. An odd sensation of heat flooded its way from her scalp to her toes. Scampering towards the beam of light coming in through the bay window, Pearl's reddish-brown locs were illuminated by the moon's glow and appeared as flames shimmering upon her head.

Pearl realized what was happening. Her beloved lion had escaped from the park carousel. The reverberating shocks signified Lion's departure from the steel, motorized pole that held him captive for more than fifty years.

Lion was free.