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Summer House

Caroline Riley

Wind chimes danced with the breeze outside an open set of glass double doors, begging to be invited in with the tickling smell of cucumber. A candle burned on a walnut table, wind taunted the flame, and a trail of smoke weaved its way past paintings of skulls and oceans hanging on mint walls. Like incense for the living, the home breathed summer, warm sun, and crisp wind. The dog-eared pages of magazines ruffled in its grip and paper argued with ink, forgiving each other when the storm had passed only to hurtle threats of fluttering off the counter at the next breath. A ray of sun slashed through the double doors, searing the milky hard wood like a laser meant to chop the snoozing cat straight in two, a torture with which it appeared content. A clock ticked, potted plants whispered, and the fuzzy beast thunked his tail to celebrate the season. The skull of a deer pouted over the mantle, upset with the mirror across the wall that showed not thirteen points but twelve, what a lie, and the music irritated his younger brother whose bones lay labeled and unperturbed in the dining room. The kettle stirred, promising tea to the young fawn waiting patiently at the table, but tea would never come. No one drank tea in the summer.

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