# Greenhouse
## By Anne Davis

Greenhouse. That's what the locals called it. For an ordinary passerby would mistake it for any other, old mansion, there were lots of them in New Orleans. But this one was different. No one was quite sure who lived there, if anyone did at all. But if no one lived there, then who watered all the plants? There were *many* plants. Tens upon hundreds of plants. They grew throughout the entire building, weaving in and out of windows and doors, and creeping up the cracked brick walls. That's how Greenhouse got its name, you see, because of its extensive amount of plants.

The people of New Orleans say that the strange plants within Greenhouse release a certain pollen that messes with your mind in ways no one can explain. It blends reality and fear, creating illusions strong enough to make the most sensible person go insane. Once you walk in, you're most likely not going to come out. But that didn't stop me when my best friend, Max Droyshei, dared me to go inside on the Saturday before the beginning of our sophomore year.

It took us a while to get there, because the old house rested in the swamp a few miles outside of town. I remember being amazed at how beautiful the building was. It truly was a masterpiece of architecture. I pushed the creaky, vine-ridden door open carefully. Instantly, my nose was filled with the most desirable smell, it urged me to enter further into the house. The door slammed behind me, and I immediately felt trapped. I began searching for a way out, but couldn't find any. Greenhouse was *so big*. My head was spinning, and my heart started racing. I felt like I was in a maze but the walls were shifting. *It's all in my head* I told myself, but the darkness was closing in on me. It almost felt like I was dreaming.

I was so scared, all the blood rushed to my head. I felt crazy, and wondered how long this was going to last. I saw things, things I couldn't explain. I heard and saw people walking around upstairs, but somehow knew they weren't real. It wasn't my imagination, something had control of me. I was spinning around and around, everything turned inside out. There was nowhere to go, nowhere was safe, because the monster wasn't in Greenhouse at all, it was inside my own head. It's crazy what the mind can do, it can tell the truth but it can also tell the most hurtful lies. I became the king of my own prison cell. Someone had to come and save me, anyone. I was fighting a civil war inside myself, and I was never getting out.

Unknown things chased me down the hallways, I tripped over invisible blocks. Strange dark figures watched me from far away. The shadows followed me. Blood-curdling sounds came from nearby rooms. Screams, pain, destruction. Horrible, indescribable faces watched me through any open window. Bodiless beings whispered terrible things to me. Demons surrounded me, leaving me motionless on the ground.

Just barely, I felt vines start to wrap around my body. The thick, coarse branches, with sharp leaves that cut into my skin. I couldn't break them, they had a very strong hold of me, and slowly pulled me away from reality. I forgot who I was before. I tried to scream but nothing came out. I reached up towards the light, knowing I wouldn't last much longer. I kept holding on, but I didn't know how I could make it through the darkness. There was a hopelessness inside of my heart that kept pulling me down. It was a struggle just to stay alive, but I *had* to keep fighting. I couldn't lose yet. But my strength was failing, there was nothing left in me now. I sunk deeper into this state, and slipped through the darkness.

Max waited and waited, but I never came out. I assumed over time, everyone in town eventually forgot about me, there's no way to be sure. And the house is still there, still empty and plant-ridden. It's waiting to claim it's next victim. If you don't watch yourself, you could end up just like me. Not dead, just encapsulated inside the darkest depths of my own mind. I have found my fate, lost forever in the walls of Greenhouse.