

Robert Carver, the secrets untold by Karen Suckling

I had waited over two hundred years for this moment, engulfed in darkness, the cold and heartless dust-covered bricks my only company. There were sounds, of course. Voices and footsteps that came closer, toying with me, only to retreat once more.

Conversations changed, spoken until the recent days where beeps fill the gaps that real voices used to. I'm uncertain what is on the other side of the wall, but there's a contraption, something I can hear that is not within the house. Other people's lives come through it into this house. I used to worry, but at least it provides music, words and conversation, stories and action of its own.

No longer could I hear the familiar scratching of feathers upon parchment, and I longed for a feather to tickle my pages once more, to leave new words, new marks, new secrets. I longed for someone to discover the secrets I held within my own depths, the secrets of centuries past.

I could not tell you the day, or even the year that it happened, but the world had changed when I heard the thundering sound of my soulless shelter being torn down around me. The harsh banging and the deep vibrations continued for hours. Layers of dust fell through the chimney and settled on my cover. But through it all, I saw the first glimmer of light that I had for centuries.

Once the banging had stopped, I found I was grateful for the thick layer of dust that now protected me from the strange world beyond and the bright light. A light that I recalled but that my leather body had grown unaccustomed to seeing.

Hands were reaching in, grabbing and tossing the rubble from around me. And that's when I felt it. Not the coldness of bricks, or a whisper of chilly air, or the gentle cascade of soot and dust. This touch was wholesome, real, alive, and it had its grip firmly around me. I had no choice now. I was lifted into the light.

"What's this?" I heard a boy's voice ask as I was repeatedly turned over, my thick leather cover being dusted off by the softest touch, the softest hands.

“Looks like an old book to me,” replied an older, deeper male voice.

“What’s it say on the front?”

The boy’s hand circled my embossed cover, freeing more dust, his fingers gliding over my delicate grooves.

“Says *Robert Carver*, then at the bottom, *His Book*. But I can’t make out the date. Looks pretty old though.”

“Well open it up then!” the older man commanded.

The boy did as he was instructed, and the same soft hands slowly opened my cover. I could feel an excitement growing within me, a desperate desire to share the secrets that had been stowed within. The fresh air caressed my pages as they flicked through the young boy’s fingers.

“The writing’s all faded. It’s too faint to read.” He tossed me upon a small glass coffee table.

My dreams of sharing the truths within vanished, my soul was broken, my pages worthless. I had waited too long. I couldn’t bear to be put down, discarded and forgotten. These were not words I could hear, not words I would allow myself to hear.

Anger grew inside me and I felt myself shudder, at first just a little and then harder and faster until my cover flew open and both sets of eyes were upon me once more. I opened at the first page, the waves lapping in the darkness of the night and the fierce wind blowing shrill, and thus, mine and Robert Carver’s story was told.