Light and Shade by Max Pinder

(Finalist, 8 to 10 years category, Janis Clark Short Story Competition)

I didn't take any notice at first. It was just a light breeze blowing through my
hair, something you experience every day. But then it got stronger, turning into a strong wind. The midsummer sun beat down on my face rapidly as I quickly ran to shelter from the sudden gust. But then I stopped. And listened. Among the pounding wind and the beating breeze, there was drying. Huge sobs could be heard, cutting through the morning sunlight.

I gazed around me, baffled. There was no one else around, the dull empty park was completely deserted. I looked behind large bushes, checked the tops of trees. But without success.

"Oh, you won't be able to see me, no one ever does."

Huh? who had said that? There was definitely no one in the park.

"Hello?"

Silence.

"HELLO?"

More sobbing and then an unearthly, distant reply;

"You'll never find me, nobody sees ghosts!"

"G-g-ghosts?" I stuttered. "B-but your only supposed to come out at night!"

"Not me! The ghoul wept, "I just haven't got the hang of that yet!"

I pondered for a moment. This ghost seemed harmless enough, but a ghost that doesn't come out at night!? That was utterly ridiculous! Then an idea flashed in my mind. Hmmm…

I told the ghost my plan, and he sniffed and slowly nodded. Or at least I thought it did; because he was invisible. And with that, the spectre blew a long gust of wind through my face, and flew of through the morning sunlight.

The next morning, I got up early and steadily climbed out of my cranky bed. I yawned loudly and then remembered with a gasp! The ghost! I dashed to the window and drastically yanked it wide open as far as it would go. At the split second I did so, without warning, an overwhelming gust of wind blew inside, making my hair matted and ruffled.

"Hello!" I joyfully called to the ghost.

The spectre called good morning to me in an eerie tone, then fluttered around the room in a small, light breeze. I suddenly realized my bedroom light was beaming out brightly. I wandered over to the little, white switch on the wall and turned it off.

"Arrggghh!!!" The ghost cried out deafeningly in my ear. "What happened? What's this?"

"Darkness! Obviously! You're only supposed to come out in this!" This ghost was thicker than I thought!

"R-r-really?"

"Yes! Come back tomorrow and I'll show you again!"

And I did. And the next day. And the next! And after a while, the ghoul was used to it, and I didn't see the ghost in the park again. Or at least, not in in daytime. But one dark, winters night, I heard a light rustling in the wind, and I heard the ghost saying something that was but lost in the wind in seconds. I did not hear what he said, but I somehow knew it was something good. I simply, slowly smiled, and carried on walking.