

Nightmare

By Benjamin Herrington

The rain poured relentlessly on the roof of the old house. Electric blue light reflected the eerie shadows from tree branches on off-white walls. The power had gone out some time ago, so the intermittent flashes of lightning provided the only illumination. The rumbling of thunder filled the entirety of the house, startling its young occupants. Mother Nature provided an ominous enough scene to scare anyone, let alone three young children.

The youngest, a skinny eight year old boy, was especially cautious as he had believed the house to be a haven for spirits who hadn't quite passed on yet. On more than one occasion, he had encountered what he thought to be ghosts. He only told his parents about the incidents once. Even at his age, he knew when he wasn't being taken seriously and stopped bringing up the subject. His siblings, however, had each had run ins of their own.

On a night similar to this one, his older sister was awakened when she heard a banging sound coming from her closet. She got out of bed and opened the closet door. What she saw chilled her to the bone. She saw two figures staring back at her. Instantly, she slammed the door and ran out of her bedroom screaming. When confronted by her parents, she was told to stop over reacting and to go back to sleep. Later that night, she felt someone tap her on the shoulder and sprung up in her bed. As she scanned the room, she didn't see anyone or anything that could have touched her. Just as she lay back down to go to sleep, she heard a faint groan and the slamming of her closet door. It was the next morning that she decided to remove all of her clothes from her closet and then nail the door shut.

All three children huddled together in the family room. They had been watching television when the power went out. Every time the thunder roared, they would jump a little. They remained in the middle of the room for a little over an hour when the older of the two boys decided that they should move to their parents room. The master bedroom had a bathroom and was closer to the front door. With their brother leading the way, they crept their way towards the master bedroom. Suddenly, lightning flashed what appeared to be the silhouette of a man, through the French doors on the master bedroom. The three children froze. Bang!!! The sound of the thunder caused them all to retreat back to the family room, almost trampling each other. With hearts pounding, they found themselves back at the doorway of the family room. They unanimously decided that, no matter what happened, they would continue on to their parent's bedroom. The youngest, without any prompting, began a full out sprint towards the French doors. The others followed close behind.

Once in the master bedroom, the older brother began to rummage through the drawers of an old desk that had been in the house since they first moved in. Their parents used to desk as more of a large toolbox than anything else. Suddenly, a beam of light cast out from inside of the drawer and he pulled out a flashlight. Other than the electric blue flashes the lightning had provided, this was the first light they had seen in almost ninety minutes. For some reason, the ability to control this light source seemed to comfort them all. As more time passed, the children passed around the flashlight, telling spooky stories to each other while holding the light under their faces. The mildly frightening campfire stories they told each other would pale in comparison to what was soon to take place.

Gradually, they each began to grow more and more tired. One by one, they fell asleep, huddled in the center of the room. At some point, a loud banging noise woke them all up. Still groggy, they looked around and didn't see anything that would have made the sound. Assuming that it had been lightning, they all laid back down. Bang!!! They heard it again. The oldest decided that she would look around with the flashlight. She cast the beam slowly across the wall, towards the French doors. When she illuminated the door, she instantly dropped the light and covered her mouth. The older of the boys picked up the light and flashed it towards the door. The very moment the light hit the door, all of the lights in the house came back on. A human-like shape appeared at the doorway. There were also, red splatter marks on the doors. The lights went out just as suddenly as they had turned on.

Paralyzed with fear, the three terrified children stared in the direction of the doorway. The house somehow seemed darker and colder now. Above them, the sound of footsteps disrupted the silence. It sounded like someone pacing back and forth. The sound would go from one side to the other, stop and then proceed to the other side of the ceiling. As the children stared upward, lightning flashed the shadow of what appeared to be a person hanging from the tree outside. Seconds of terrifying silence passed before the percussion from the thunder shook the house. Bang!!! The sound of breaking glass and a loud thud followed. The footsteps had stopped with the lightning, but resumed shortly after the thunder came, only this time the pacing was much faster.

Footsteps, thunder, and the occasional banging sound provided a frightful melody as the three children were crippled with terror. For what seemed like hours, they were trapped by sheer horror. Their parents should have returned long ago. All alone, they had to endure the torture. No one was going to come and save them. At the point when it seemed as if the night couldn't get any worse, the water began to seep across the floor. It was dark and muddy water that saturated the floor. The children climbed onto the bed. Faster and faster, the water rushed into the room. The water began to rise. Soon it started soaking into the bed. The kids couldn't escape the water. In no time at all, the water level had risen above the bed. They began to float. A voice began to rise with the

water.

“Wake up.” It repeated over and over. The rain stopped. Light began to chase the darkness away.

“Wake up, Joseph!”

Joseph opened his eyes. He was in his bed. His mother was standing over him.

“Joseph,” she said, placing her hand on his forehead, “Wake up. I think you were having a nightmare.”