

## Don't Run in the Halls

By Kash Majerus

The doors to exit the school were shut, the lights were flickering and everything was quiet. I was at our school, on a Saturday night, having what some people would call a sleepover and waiting for my best friend, Jack, who left for the bathroom a while ago and hadn't returned. He said he'd be back but it had been over an hour since. Something felt odd, like this wasn't a typical class sleepover. It was different.

There were three people from each class, some I knew, others I did not. While there were 13 high schoolers invited, only 12 had shown up. No one heard of or saw the last student. Ever since I had shown up, something was off. My friends had convinced me that everything was fine and it was probably because it was close to Halloween and the spooky spirits were in the atmosphere, but I knew something was wrong.

As I exited the room I saw something different. The lights were on but they had this flickering movement to them that wasn't normal. I remember thinking; *are they going to go out?* The bathroom, where my friend was supposed to be, was two hallways down and about 10 feet to the right. As I was walking through the hallways I started to speed up. Something was following me. I could feel it creeping closer and closer.. As I started to run it grew even closer. I could feel it breathing down my neck. I ran faster and all I could hear was my heart beating and my feet pounding. Boom...boom...boom. As I started racing down the hall the lights followed me. Then all of a sudden the hallways went dark. I heard a scream. I ran faster and faster. Boom, Boom, Boom.... Eventually my feet went numb. I was almost there. As I pushed the door open, I fell, tripping over what I thought was my own feet. As I looked down, I saw a body. It was a

body I don't recognize. I thought to myself, "*Was it the 13th person?*" "*Was it Jack?*" I had to find out. I reached down to grab the body; it moved!

*How?* How could someone lose so much blood and still be alive? I grabbed the person's shoulder to roll it over. Then out of the blue, something snatched my arm pulling me away. It was Jack! The expression on his face was horrendous. He looked like he was about to pass out.

With little air left he managed to spill out the word "He's gone".

He said in a timid voice "it got him".

What got him?

I started to yell "who got him?".

Jack froze with terror and went unresponsive

I screamed, "JACK!"

I could hear a rush of wind coming down the hallway. It crept closer and closer.

Jack managed to whisper the word – "hide".

Where do I hide in the bathroom? I asked with worry.

The wind was swirling faster and louder. At this moment I was shaking so bad I couldn't move. I froze. I was standing there in the middle of the bathroom; frozen. Jack grabbed my arm dragging me into the bathroom stall. He latched it behind us. Right at that moment the door swung open. It swung open with a force so strong the door banged against the wall snapping the door off its hinges. The lights went off. The anomaly let off a glow, a green glow, that was so bright it lit the whole bathroom up. The little cracks in the bathroom stalls allowed for minimal vision of the creature. At first he looked like a ghost but the more I examined his body's shape and color – it hit me. This wasn't an unfamiliar face; it was Mr. Norris, the chemistry teacher. Something was different about him, beside that fact that he was five feet off the ground and

green, – something was different. His stomach growled with anticipation and hunger. Hunger for children. It can't be that. Mr Norris was a kind man, he was the teacher that everyone loved. Students would constantly come into his room and start conversations with him. The kind of conversations that best friends would have. *What happened to him?* I had his class the day before and he was perfectly fine. Everyone was their typical extrovert selves bouncing off the walls and exploring the hallways. *Was someone out to get him?* He was a single man that lived by himself on the outside of town in a beautiful house with huge windows and a luscious green yard that was extremely inviting and welcoming. By then Jack and I were freaking out. Mr. Norris was flying around searching every stall. He started at the first stall, pushed it open and continued to move towards us.

Jack said in a hushed voice “we have to escape”.

If we'd crawled underneath the stall at the right time he'd miss us and we would escape. Mr. Norris was at the third stall, swung open the door and Jack screamed in silence. We hustled down on the floor and started to crawl as fast as we could. Right as my foot left the stall, the door swung open and Mr. Norris zoomed in. We shut the door to our new stall and Mr. Norris fled the bathroom to seek his next victim. Jack and I slowly crept out of the stall to go find out who was laying on the floor. I skeptically grab their shoulder to roll them over. His face is gone. It was torn and ripped apart like someone took a big bite of his face. I screamed and jumped back. His face was unrecognizable though. Even though I went to a big school I would think I'd still be able to recognize him. This was all new for me. I've never been in an instance where I didn't know what to do – I'm a smart kid. This time was different. Jack and I made eye contact for too long. Jack's face had become bright red and his eyes were exploding out of his skull. Jack didn't cry, he was a tough kid. He was raised on a farm with very harsh parents. I only saw him at

school, we never hung out, only at school. School is our safe spot. Correction; was our safe spot. We decided our best bet was to head back to the room where everyone else was. Jack slowly crept out into the hallway looking to see if anyone was out there. The coast was clear. We moved very slowly with proximal vision of about 3 feet. I hugged Jack's arm like it was something I wanted to strangle. We moved one step at a time, left, right, left. We made it to the first hallway intersection. Jack slowly bent over and around the corner checking to see if anyone was there.

He turned around and said “ you okay?” with that expression that gave me the sense to let go of his arm.

I let go in a flash and said ”perfectly fine”,” You?”.

He said “ Of course I am!” and we went on.

Moving at such a slow pace that all you could hear was the sound of our heart beats. Mine was beating irregularly fast and his was a steady beat; thud, thud. That was until we heard another scream. The scream came from behind us. That was when we started to run. The screaming grew closer and closer and we ran faster and faster. We didn't stop for the next intersection we ran right through hoping to make it to the room before the screaming caught us. With us both barreling down the hallway the thudding got louder and the screaming got closer. We couldn't see anything in front of us or behind us, something bad was bound to happen. I kept running and then all of a sudden – SMACK, right into a solid cement wall. Everything went dark, I blacked out. I awoke with this high pitch ringing in my ear and Jack was gone. The screaming was even more sensitive and seemed so much closer. I lied there waiting for something to happen or someone to come. Then as I started to drift away, something grabbed me. It started dragging me across the floor! I looked up to see what it was. It was Zed. Zed was our school janitor. He was a big man which made it easy for him to drag me swiftly across the floor.

At first I thought Zed was there to help me escape the unknown creature but he wasn't there for that, was he?

In the movies where the main characters get split apart and never see each other again. Well it all happened because I hit a WALL! Zed pulled me into his closet. He forcefully tugged me right up beside Jack. I was in so much pain I couldn't refuse the restraints. After all, Jack hit the wall too! Oh thank gosh I'm so glad we hit the wall together. I guess that's why they say "No Running In The Hallways". It all makes sense now. Jack was still knocked out. The ringing in my ear was still there and as I sat there the ringing went away and I blacked out..... Again

I woke back up and saw that Jack was gone. He wouldn't have just left me here alone. The room was lit from this bright green liquid on the workbench. I tried to stand but the more I tried to move, the more my body ached. I was tied to the large pipe in the closet. My wrists were numb and I was too tired to scream. The door opened slowly. It was Zed. Zed came into the closet with a grin on his face that was unnatural for his face. He went over to the table, grabbed the green liquid and started to creep towards me. I started to struggle and refused to drink it. He held me down and forced the nasty liquid down my throat. It burned with every gulp. He forced every last drop down my throat. Once again I blacked out.....

7 years later here I lie strapped in a bed. I still glow. But hey on the bright side at least Jack and I never got separated. He lies strapped to his bed right beside me. I don't know where we are but I can still hear little children screaming everyday. Just remember the next time you have a slumber party don't run in the hallways.

# **Don't turn your back at night.**

They call me crazy, but my name is Kieth H. Valnora, I am 16 years old, and I live in Solvang, California. People have always made fun of me for being so afraid of the dark. They never realized I may have a reason for it. Reason for my . . ."irrational", if you would, fear would be for many reasons. But the main reason would be the simple "who knows what is lurking in the shadows" and I have proof that the things hiding in the shadows are far beyond terrifying.

## Chapter one

I stood in front of my large school. I didn't want to go inside, not at all. I didn't want to go in, not because of the normal "school is so boring!" stuff. I got made fun of every day for my severe nyctophobia, fear of the dark. I had been diagnosed with it at age five, my parents had noticed I was way more afraid of the dark than normal five year olds, even during the day when the lights were off and there was still plenty of light in the room I was extra cautious.

I sighed and walked inside, clutching my backpack straps. I didn't even get five steps inside the building when people started pointing and shouting  
"Crazy, watch out! There's a shadow behind you!".

I shrugged it off, my nyctophobia recognized my own shadow. Once I got to my locker I was hesitant to open it. Lockers were always dark inside.

"KV!" I heard someone shout. It was my friend, Allan.

I sighed with relief, I wouldn't have to open my locker without someone next to me now.

"Hey Al." I waved at him.

Allan bounded to me and clapped me on the back.

"Need me to open the door?" He asked me, realizing I was just staring at it.  
"No no, I got it." I said, and I slowly opened the door, somewhat expecting a shadow creature to jump out.

I had seen them before, horrid creatures they are. Sometimes when it's nighttime, I look out of my window to see a tall, slender shadow creature with pure white eyes and rows upon rows of teeth. Terrifying they are, really.

Someday everyone is going to see one, and realize why I'm so afraid. I've even heard their wails in the night, so I've always been glad that I kept my light on at all times, even when I'm at school the lights are on. My mom understood why.

I must have spaced out at some point because Allan started shaking me.  
"Ay snap out of it, we have to get to class, the first bell just rang!" He said in a hurry.

"Okay, okay I'm going." I said, grabbing my books and hanging my bag on a hook inside the locker.

I followed Allan to our class, Social Studies was our first period. Once we had entered the classroom, I went to my desk and spread out my books in a specific order, then I started stacking them in neat little piles in the corner of my desk.

People often thought I had OCD because I liked things organized, but no, I just like things in a specific order depending on their size, shape, and colors.

I took out a piece of paper and started doodling. When the teacher came in I looked up and put the drawing away. She hated when people drew in class.

She started writing things on the board, when she finished she snapped her marker shut and slammed it against the board.

“Write!” She snapped.

She was not in a good mood today it seemed.

I got out my mechanical pencil and started writing. Timelines were my least favorite thing in social studies, and when my teacher was mad she loved making us do extra. I wondered what ticked her off.

The second I finished my timeline I looked up only to see that my teacher had written down another one, but made it harder by not writing all the years.

I groaned and started writing down the timeline base. Once I had finished that I opened my textbook to find the years. I ran my finger along the pages, scanning for the years.

I had just finished the timeline when the bell rang. The teacher scoffed at the bell and waved her hand to dismiss us.

Allan and I started walking down the hall, complete silence between us. All around us the other students erupted into chaos, but Allan and I walked on to our next class. I entered the classroom and looked at the equations on the board, algebra.

I was a smart kid, but I didn't make pre-algebra in eighth grade, so now here I am, a Freshman and in normal algebra. It didn't make sense to me, I ended each year with straight A's, yeah I got late assignments every now and then, okay about three times a school week.

I still ended with straight A's, it just really didn't make sense to me.

I finished writing down the equations and set my paper and pencil aside.

I pulled out a book and started reading to pass the time.

As far as I could tell today was a pretty chill day, Fridays were like that. Most of the teachers didn't assign homework and only had us write stuff down. The rest of the class period was ours.

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The final bell rang and Allan and I walked out into the cloudy sunshine. We were both excited for next week, the last week of school. We'd have the summer to ourselves.

Allan liked to walk me home for obvious reasons, my street was covered in shadows at this time of day, especially since it was cloudy outside.

"You really should get over this fear." Allan said.

"I told you, it's not something I can control." I responded.

When we reached my house I waved goodbye to Allan and walked inside. I immediately noticed that a light was off in the living room. I shuddered and just stared at it. I could see the entire room but the shadows were a huge nope for me.

I went into the kitchen and grabbed the broom, then I walked back to the living room.

With the broom handle I flipped the lightswitch on and looked around. I didn't see anything.

About an hour later my mom came home. I didn't get up from my bed, I just yelled a greeting to her from across the house.

I continued to draw, I liked to sketch small drawings of the shadow creatures. Pretty ironic right?

A couple minutes later I heard a thunder crash.

"Moooom? You didn't tell me we had a thunderstorm coming-" I said, concerned.

Thunderstorms meant possible blackouts, and blackouts meant shadows, and shadows meant shadow *creatures*.

"Don't worry hon, it'll only last about an hour, it shouldn't get severe." She called back.

I shuddered. "*Shouldn't*"

I turned back to my drawing, finishing the glint on the teeth of the horrifying creature.

I still had yet to find someone else who had seen these things, I was quite surprised to find no one else at school had ever mentioned them. Still, though, I knew what I had seen at night.

A couple of hours later I noted the time that Dad would normally be home, 7:35.

He wouldn't be home tonight. He was out a couple states away on a work project, and he wouldn't return until Summer Vacation had begun. Next week.

The storm continued. Each minute that had passed made me more and more anxious, the thunder was getting as loud as the lighting was bright. I didn't like this. At all.

I tied my lower-neck length hair back and continued drawing, trying to distract myself. I darkened the lines around the creature and started shading it in, leaving the eyes pure white. I erased a few lines on the face to give the eyes a dripping effect.

I took my black ink pen and started coloring the creature. Careful as to not color too dark, I thought I might add a background later. Once I had finished filling in the drawing with black ink I took my pencil back out and shaded the eyes to make them look glassy, and when I was done shading I took out a white ink pen and added highlights to the eyes.

When I was finally satisfied with the drawing I folded it up and tucked it into a folder where I kept the creature drawings, that was when I noticed the lights started flickering.

"Mom!" I shouted.

"It's okay! They're just flickering!" She called back.

"Where's my flashlight?!" I panicked.

"Calm down, Kieth!" My mom ordered.

Sweat started forming in beads on my forehead as I desperately threw papers around my desk, looking for my flashlight. "Calm down" is the least helpful thing right now.

I would have just used my phone's flashlight but it's outdated and the flashlight stopped working months ago. I couldn't believe what was happening.

The ground shook and moments later a piercing boom shook through the walls. I screamed as the lights turned off. I crumbled to the ground with my hands over my head and my head on the ground, shaking.

My mom came into my room and tried to get me to stand up. In moments like this we usually headed to the basement.

"Get up, get up!" She said hurriedly.

I hesitantly obeyed and we walked through the darkness of our blacked out home. My mom let go of my hand to enter her room for a second, unfortunately her room was right next to a window in the living room. I glanced outside and felt my blood run cold.

Staring back at me were two large, glassy white eyes and rows upon rows of teeth.

I opened my mouth to scream but nothing came out. Just an open mouth and a held gasp of air. It stared at me, breathing through its open mouth. I couldn't see its body, it was far too dark outside. All I saw were its dead eyes and its teeth glinting every time lightning flashed.

My mom, thankfully, came out of her room with a spare flashlight and grabbed my hand again. She led me down to the basement where she flicked the flashlight on and found some pillows for us to sit on.

She started talking but I couldn't understand a thing she said, I was too focused on what I saw. Those dead eyes... I wondered why no one else ever saw these wretched creatures.

Perhaps they were hunting me, maybe I was the only one who ever paid enough attention to the dark to see them, maybe I was schizophrenic. I had read about people letting their fears take physical forms in front of their eyes.

Maybe I was imagining it all...

"Kieth? Are you listening?" My mom said suddenly.

I snapped back to reality and looked up at her.

"Sorry, I spaced off." I answered.

"You need to cut that habit, I see you do this with Allan as well."

I messed with my hoodie strings.

"Sorry." I muttered.

She sighed and we sat in silence for a few minutes. I looked at my phone. The time was now almost 8:30. Time was going by too slow and too fast at the same time. Weird right?

We could hear the thunder, even in our basement. It was loud.

I wondered how many of the creatures were lurking outside, this was the perfect time for them to be out and about. Dark, wet, only occasional light flashes, the sound of the thunder to cover up their piercing screams...It wasn't a pleasant thought.

I knew I wasn't the only one who heard them. Despite my half belief of me just imagining them, I know I'm not the only one. There have been several reports of people missing, blood and strain marks found in their last known whereabouts. Always disappearing under the safe cover of darkness. The proof was too good to be overlooked as another murder.

Then I heard it. That horrible scream. My mom heard it too. Her face went pale.

"I told you!" I nearly choked.

"It was probably a cat." She responded shakily.

I have given her solid proof time, and time again. She always found a way to cover it up with a "reasonable" excuse.

Once when I was little, I saw one looking into my window. I yelled for my mom and dad, and they came in. They saw its eyes. Then they flicked on the light switch that turned on the outside light and it almost immediately vanished. They then said it was a trick of the light from another room and the window.

That was when I started sleeping with the light on, both in my room *and* outside.

The scream interrupted my train of thought again. Only this time, it was followed by two more.

I looked my mom dead in the eye. We stayed like that for a few minutes.

"I'm gonna go look." She said after a while.

"No!" I shouted, grabbing her wrist.

"Kieth! What has gotten into you?!" She said, shocked.

"It's not what's in me, it's what's out *there!*" I said, trying to keep a hold on my emotions.

Cheesy line, yes, but it worked, because she shook me off and sat back down.

. . .

About an hour passed and the storm went away, the screeching stopped, and the power turned on.

The sun had officially set, but the street and porch lights kept the creatures at bay. As far as I could tell, they mostly kept to the forest about two miles from my house. There weren't any lights there, and barely any civilization. California has a lot of forests.

I flicked on all the lights on my side of the house and laid in bed. I typically just sleep in what I wore during the day, I found it more simple rather than changing twice a day.

It took about an hour and a half before I could finally fall asleep, even then I was constantly awoken by the distant screams in the forest.

And Allan always asks why I look like I never sleep.

Truth is, I do *try* to sleep. I don't understand why everyone acts as if the creatures don't exist. Mom even heard their screams just a few hours ago.

The forest is just a few miles from here, surely everyone else awake can hear them?

I don't understand how I'm the only one who acknowledges their existence. They haunt this godforsaken place, every year at least four people vanish into the forests.

I sighed and turned my back to the wall. I couldn't fall back asleep, I had been awake for around thirty minutes now.

I closed my eyes again.