

Silence

By Aspen Eichelburger

2018 Horror Story Contest Winner

IT WAS OCTOBER 31st, Halloween. I was house sitting for my parents while they were away for their anniversary. Embarrassingly enough, that was my gift for them - house sitting. I was a broke college student, and they had filled the pantry for me, how could I pass it up? Plus I loved my childhood home, mostly. The only thing I didn't really like was the fact that it was miles from anyone or anything, and it was way too quiet.

Until the doorbell rang.

Like I said before, there weren't neighbors for miles. There certainly shouldn't have been any trick or treaters around. I cautiously bridged the gap between the kitchen and the front door. My hand hovered over the door handle and I put my ear against the old wooden door, listening for something, anything. Breathing, perhaps, or the excited chatter of trick or treaters. The silence that met my ears was deafening. I could feel it. It was tangible.

Suddenly, I was hit with intense, unexplainable fear. It knocked me right off my feet.

As I hit the floor, whimpering, I crawled behind the couch and curled up, trying to steady my breathing. I knew I had locked the door, a precaution I had thought unnecessary out here, but I guess I was wrong. Were there any unlocked windows? Did mom and dad lock the windows? I didn't know. But did it even matter?

I stopped breathing, realizing that the door was opening. A cool breeze wafted through the family room, and the door didn't make a sound. Something...not human stood in the doorway. It was big, and growing. It could barely squeeze through the door, but it did, and it set its eyes directly on me.

I screamed like a banshee, deafeningly loud, until I blacked out.

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I woke up on the floor behind the couch, the door wide open, the wind howling. The tv was on, as was the radio, and my car, which was parked protectively in front of the porch, the radio emitting static out of the open windows. It was so loud I couldn't think. On the floor next to me lay a handwritten letter. It read:

K,

I FOUND YOU BLACKED OUT, WITH IT TOWERING OVER YOU.

I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO ENCOUNTER THAT, BUT YOU DID A GOOD JOB - SCREAMING IS OUR BEST DEFENSE, THEY CAN'T STAND NOISE. IT'S POISON TO THEM. IT ESCAPED, BUT I HAVE MADE IT LOUD ENOUGH FOR YOU HERE THAT IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COME BACK. DON'T WORRY, THEY ONLY HUNT ON HALLOWEEN - YOU SHOULDN'T BE BOTHERED AGAIN.

BEST OF LUCK.

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It's been exactly ten years since that night tonight. I'm recording all of this with every single machine (phone, ipod, laptop...) at full volume back home in New York, but there's been a power outage, and the batteries won't last much longer without a charger...

It's coming back tonight. I've been fighting it for ten years now, every Halloween. I've screamed until my vocal cords gave out - I am now legally mute, and screaming is impossible for me. I can't fight it anymore - what exactly it is I don't know, but I think it got the man hunting for it, as the letters stopped coming years ago. I'm next.

Whoever gets this, please, never let it get to you - it feeds off of the silence, is almost one with the silence. Even when you go to bed, with nothing but your fan running, it lurks, waiting. You are not safe. The silence is not safe...noise is our only salvation.