

The Scream

I dragged the rough quilt over my bare skin, having previously bought it the other day and not yet having washed it for the first time it felt like sandpaper against my torso, so I tried to manoeuvre myself into a position that would be comfortable to rest. My aching body yearned for the sweet release of sleep, and my soul thirsted for an escape from reality. This flat had proved nothing but trouble since moving in. Everything was sub-par: the train that rumbled the ceiling every 17 minutes, the blackouts that would spring at random, like a tiger, hiding in wait to pounce on its unsuspecting prey. I wanted my old life back. I wanted to see my children.

AAARGH!

It rocked me to my core, forcing my slowly withering eyes open as though they were budding flowers at the dawn of spring, a scream so loud yet so direct it felt like it was sent with the sole purpose of piercing my eardrums and violently disturb me from my attempted slumber. I rose from my uncomfortable pillow, and the poorly assembled nightstand creaked loudly as I ascended from my pit of self-shame, making the unconscious decision to investigate this currently unidentified disturbance. I felt a twist in my stomach, the feeling of trepidation causing me to hesitate with every inch I moved. I leaned out my window and was immediately slapped by the strong aroma of marijuana and urine, the floor above me seemed silent as I scanned the flats for any sign of that guttural noise. It had sounded like it had come from beneath me, I briefly considered that it may have been the sound of Hell, calling me to end my troubles, before opening my dingy door and setting off down the hallway, passing other flats before coming to the stairs.

The walls remained silent, giving no indication of where the scream had originated. As I crept down the cold concrete steps to the floor below me, I thought to myself, *this could be dangerous, I should just call the police*, but curiosity had lodged her claws into me, and I was being dragged along. I had no regard for my own safety, fear no longer had any effect on me, and I felt nothing but regret and numbness, it's probably why I didn't turn back, I was getting closer to the scream as a *THUMP!* Travelled down the hallway like someone had hit a table. I continued to walk as a light, but a putrid smell filled and violated my nostrils, I wasn't sure what it was, but as I moved down the hallway the smell grew fouler, and I felt myself struggling not to gag. Finally, I found the room. I didn't know anyone on this floor, I barely knew anyone here at all as I had only been here a month, I knocked on the door, no answer, but it was not locked, not loose enough to swing open but I applied a small bit of pressure and was able to get inside.

What I was greeted with shocked and sickened me to my core, a tapestry of body parts adorned the walls, men, women, and children, whoever did this did not discriminate, suddenly, the door behind me slammed shut, and my heart sank.

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