

Pavlov's Puppet

By: Phillip Arloro

Six...that's how many people are left.

There were nearly one hundred of us when the building's doors were locked shut but one after the other he picked us off, leaving only their echoing screams to remember them.

This monster, or whatever it is, is terrorizing us. By the time we figured out why and when it killed people, it was far too late. No matter where you are in this god-forsaken office building it can see you and if it senses that you even have a flicker of fear, you're dead. Only a single man was able to stare that demon dead in the eyes, but he hasn't been the same since. He now sits cowering in a corner, eyes glazed over with a thick layer of infinity, cowering.

That happened on day one. People were running down the hall, getting picked off one by one as the initial attack took place. One man, Frank, noticed a pattern, stopped dead in his tracks, and faced off with the horrid creature. I was far gone by then, and when we eventually explored out, we found him like this.

22 of us took refuge in a conference room that same day. Fear changed to confusion as we tried to assess what was happening. I ripped off my tie and wrapped it around a cut on a woman's leg, trying to do what I could to help. When the bells rang, our confusion immediately switched back to crippling fear and that's when he attacked again. The room went from a silent, dark void to a screaming pit of hell. Within seconds, the creature killed eight of us, splattering the walls with our blood, and the ground with bodies barely strung together. He attacked the people whose reaction was to express their fear with a scream and gave the rest of us a chance to flee. As I took one last look back I saw the woman I tried to help get flung across the conference table.

After witnessing such a horrible event, all of the survivors went to search the other floors to see if the same thing happened there. We were still shaking and barely able to breathe, but what else were we to do? We gathered up the 45 of us left from the combined total of all the floors and went to the lobby to hopefully find someone who could help. Nothing but bloody corpses and crimson blood filled the lobby. This caused us to produce enough fear for the demon to strike yet again.

ding...ding...ding

The bells...

Screaming commenced again before the lights suddenly turned on and the survivors and I stared into the center of the room where the monster was standing. It was a 6-foot beast of a creature with dog-like ears and teeth like kitchen knives. It wasn't there for long, but I swear I could see it try to finish off the person it was eating only for the chewed remains to fall out of a hole in the monster's stomach - unable to actually eat. He ran before we could get a better look. The lights turned off after that and they haven't turned back on since.

After that event, we took note of how he only attacked when we felt intense fear. Because of this, we survived a whole day without a single killing, and while it was difficult we just focused our minds on trying to escape rather than thinking about what would happen if we didn't. We tried opening some doors and calling people on the outside, but the doors were locked and there was no signal; we were completely isolated. At times, it felt like we weren't even on earth anymore, it was just a dark, endless, void.

The monster did not like us, and the next morning he began to feign attacks, hoping to scare some of us into feeling fear. I heard the bells so I knew that people were going to die, they only rang when someone would be killed. Once again, my companions were torn apart and exploded like fallen buckets of paint. The 6 of us who remained relocated to the basement, hoping the bike lockup would be enough to keep the monster out even if we felt fear.

I'm not sure how much longer we will survive but I swear I just heard bells. Maybe I'm just going crazy, but I could have sworn I just heard the bells. The 5 other survivors are asleep behind me looking as peaceful as ever.

Am I going to die?

ding...ding...ding