



Don't turn the lights off

Klara Österling 9:4

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I know where I am. I've been in this place every night for over a month now. The dark house, with the rotten smell, bringing up so many horrible memories. I shiver as I turn my flashlight on. I'm in a small room, similar to my own bedroom, but for some reason way scarier. Right now I'm sitting on a blue bed, that looks just like my own. Next to me is a bedside table with a photo I choose not to look at. I already know what's on it and even the tiniest glance at it hurts my heart like it was stabbed with a knife. Looking at the wall, I turn the photo around so I won't be able to see it, and then I leave the bed. I walk to the desk, grabbing the big, red key.

Then I stop.

I really don't want to open the big door in front of me, I know what's outside. Yet I know I can't stay in my room, I've tried before, but *they* have always found me. I know what must be done. I bite my lip and try to push down the rising panic as I put the red key in the keyhole. The door opens with a little creak, not at all like the door in my own bedroom. Nor is the corridor I now see to my right a part of my own house, and not the big front door to my left either. I already knew that though, it is as mentioned not the first time I am in this nightmarish house. I grab the key again and put it in my pocket as I start walking down the corridor as quietly as I can.

“Mary, can you get me another of those orange drink thingies?”

“Sure thing, David!” she says with a smile, clearly happy over the fact that people seems to like her drinks.

“I’ll have one too!” I say. The drinks are pretty good, or well, they really only taste soda, even though Mary says she use a lot of different liquids to get the perfect taste. At least there is no alcohol in them, because even though Mary keeps saying those drinks are the best, none of us other really like the taste of vodka nor think it’s a good idea to get drunk.

“Okay! Anyone else wants one? No?” She hurries to the kitchen. “Sis, where’s the ice?” Mary and her five guests aren’t the only ones in the house, her older sister has friends over as well, it’s kind of like a double-party going on. Mary loves parties, and holds them literally every time her parents aren’t sleeping at home. I’ve always found it a mystery how they never seem to notice. So right now we are seated in the couch and armchairs, around the coffee table. Mary’s sister and her friends are in another room, around the dining table, so they don’t disturb us and we don’t disturb them.

“Anyone else thinks it would be fun having a Halloween party this year?” asks David, who sits next to me in the couch.

“Oh I *love* halloween, that could be real fun!” I say, and when David looks at me with a smile I’m filled with a warm, happy feeling that makes me smile a little too. I’ve known David for three years now, and every single time our eyes have met I’ve felt this way. I can’t help but notice how close we sit and a bubbly feeling is spreading inside of me. Sofie, a blond, kind girl, looks really exited over the idea:

“Yeah, and everyone has to be dressed up!” she says, “And we can have scary food, I know a recipe of a cake...” She continues talking about her cake until Mary comes back.

“Here comes the drinks!” Mary is approaching from the kitchen, holding one very decorated drink in each hand. When she is about to give us the glasses she suddenly gets a concerned look. “Hmm, I think there was something special about one... but eh, whatever!” She gives me one and David the other, while we

both thank her with a smile. The drink is good, it tastes better than normal orange soda, so I guess she is improving.

“Mary, we are just talking about a Halloween party! You could make some scary drinks!” Sofie says.

“That is an awesome idea! I could make...” We continue talking about the Halloween party, coming up with some really good ideas. We are having a really good time until David’s face suddenly starts to turn green.

“Excuse me, I don’t feel very well”, he says, rushing to the bathroom. It seems to be locked, so instead he heads for the front door. He opens the door just enough to be able to get through, and doesn’t bother closing it. It is awfully silent around the couch as we all stare at the door.

“You didn’t put any alcohol in the drinks did you?” Mark asks, still looking at the door. We all remember the one time Mary tried adding vodka: Unpleasant memories. The only one liking them, except for Mary of course, was David. After only three glasses, he got sick and caused a great amount of trouble. I won’t go into details, but the party got kind of ruined.

“Nope” Mary says with a concerned look on her face.

“I should probably go check on him” Keira says and leaves the couch. Ten seconds later we hear a scream, and everyone around the couch run out. Keira is sitting, holding David in her arms. Pure panic and a little confusion is on her face. When I see David’s face my heart almost stops. His eyes are open, but they are staring into nowhere. He doesn’t move.

“Oh my god, what happened?” Mary says, running to them.

“He... he started twitching and then he just fell down... I... I don’t know what happened” Keira stumbles. I’m just standing there, completely frozen.

“He’s not breathing!” Mary screams. A ringing sound is growing louder in my ears. It’s like I’m somewhere else. I barely register Mary screaming at us to call 911. All I can see is David’s face, how it looks afraid with both mouth and

eyes open. *He can't be...* I can't understand it, even though I know what must have happened. I don't even realize I've stopped breathing. *He can't be...* But I know he is. He is dead.

I walk down the corridor as I listen carefully for any kind of noise. I have learnt by now that all of them make sounds, so if they are near I will hear them. But right now it's deadly quiet. It feels like, even though I do my best to be quiet, every step could be heard from quite far away, which is stressing me out.

The corridor is not very long, I've only passed two doors, one with a blue door handle and one with a red. At the end of the corridor, there's a big living room.

I stop.

For a second I thought I heard a sound, almost like a heavy breathing.

My heart is beating faster, and I hesitate before taking another step. Then I hear it again, more clearly this time. It sounds like a deep breath, coming from the other side of the room. I know this place is like a labyrinth of rooms and corridors. The source of the sound is probably at the other side of the wall in front of me. I don't know if whatever is there is heading towards me or not, but I'm too scared to find out. So I run, quietly and quickly, to the closest door, which so luckily happens to be a red door. I pick up my key and unlock the door.

The room seems to be another bedroom, a little bigger than the one that looked like my own. Another difference is that this one has a walk in closet. Or at least I think it's a walk in closet, for why else would there be another door in a bedroom? Then I remember where I am, and that in this place almost every room has two or three doors, probably just to make it all more of a mess. Sadly, I can't open the door, because it requires a purple key, which I don't have.

Suddenly I hear the same sound that I heard before and I freeze. I quickly check that the door is locked, which it is. If I'm right, the door should keep the creature out. This makes me a little more calm, and instead of just standing there I start looking in some drawers, searching for a key. I'm lucky, there is actually a blue key in one.

The sound is gone, so I walk out of the room, leaving the blue door unlocked if I would have to run back there again. The living room looks familiar somehow, even though I can't really say why. I pass a black sofa and an armchair standing around a small coffee table as I head for the chest of drawers at the left side of the room. There are a lot of doors everywhere, all of them locked, making this living room look pretty strange and not very nice. The chest of drawers is between a green and a blue door, and I'm happy to have the blue key. I suddenly feel even more lucky, for in the first drawer I open I find the green key as well as a battery. I'm just starting to open another drawer when my heart suddenly skips a beat.

There is a sound of heavy breathing coming from behind me.

I quickly turn around and see the contour of a dark figure with glowing red eyes approaching.

By instinct I turn my flashlight towards it to see it better. I probably shouldn't have. The minotaur's red eyes are now fixed on me and it snorts like a bull does, as it gets a real angry look. Only the head, the arms and parts of the torso are completely visible, the rest of the minotaur-like monster is faded, like a ghost. It's not the first time I see it, but it looks even scarier than I remembered.

The monster suddenly sprints, leaning a little forward like it wanted to gore me.

Filled with adrenaline and fear I run for the green door, quickly unlocking it and running into the room. I lock the door behind me as fast as I can. I jump when I hear a loud bang on it - so loud I'm surprised it didn't break. There is a loud roar and more banging on the door, and I quickly decide not to stay here.

If the door would have been red I'd probably have stayed, because I've made up a theory: The monsters can't open the doors with the same color as their eyes are. I don't really know why or how, but I've just never seen them do that. The minotaur monster has red eyes, so as long as the door isn't red they will eventually succeed on opening it.

The banging on the door continues and I turn around to find another door. There is a blue one, which I open and lock.

I suddenly hear something else and freeze. There is a hissing sound, probably from another monster. It's coming from in front of me, in another room, and I almost turn back before I remember the minotaur that may have opened its door by now. A banging on the blue door I just closed proves that's the case and look around in the dark small, almost empty room.

With panic and fear I realize there is no place to hide in here - I have to continue to the other room, where the new monster might be.

There are two doors in front of me; a red one and a yellow one. I rush for the red one, I don't even have the yellow key. If I could I would have taken the other way, for the hissing sound is only getting louder and louder.

I know for sure the monster is in the next room.

This room is pretty strange, long and a little narrow, with another blue at the other side. In the middle there is a table - with a yellow key lying on it. As fast as I can I run for it, not even caring about being quiet anymore. Before I've even reached the table the blue door handle in front of me is pressed down and the door slowly opened. The figure standing at the door is a green monster that looks like a snake with arms.

My heart skips a beat.

The monster's green glowing eyes are slowly turning at me as the it gets a malicious look. Just like the other monster this one looks like a ghost as most of the body is faded.

With a great hiss it starts sprinting towards me and I quickly grab the key and then I run as fast as I can to the door I came from, not daring to look behind me.

I leap out of the room, slamming the door behind me. Filled with panic I try to lock the door, but the key struggles and I have to remove the key and put it in again before I finally succeed.

I hear loud, echoing bangings and hissings from the other side of that door, but I'm too filled with relief to really care. Anyway the handle is green and so is the monster's eyes, so I'm not in much trouble.

Then another banging sound finds its way to my ears - I had completely forgot about the minotaur behind the blue door I used to get into this room. A new wave of adrenaline hits me and I quickly run to the yellow door, only fumbling a little with the key.

Just as I'm about to shut the door the minotaur's door smashes open.

My heart skips a beat as the monster leaps towards me with a roar.

In panic I shut the door, realizing the key is still in the keyhole.

I can't lock the door!

Without even considering to open the door to take the key I look around in the room, desperate to find another way out, but there are no other doors.

I'll have to hide somewhere.

There is a wardrobe only some feet away from me, so I run there, violently opening the doors. The space is pretty small, but I manage to get in really fast and close the doors. For some reason I turn the flashlight around, pressing it towards me and making it unable to light anything up. So it's completely dark, which even makes it more scarier to hear the minotaur break in and the sound of its breathing. Judging on where the breathings seem to come from, the minotaur walks a little bit, then stops almost right outside my wardrobe.

I'm paralyzed, trying not to breathe nor move, which is pretty hard since the small space is forcing me to stand in a very uncomfortable position. I'm also just

too well aware of my loud pantings and the sound of my heart beating in my head; consequences of me running too much and having a lot of adrenaline in my blood. Still the monster doesn't seem to hear me or understand where I am, at least it isn't coming for me.

A little growl is to be heard from outside the wardrobe, and then I hear a unrealistic voice, sounding so creepy that shivers is spreading from my toes all the way to my head, and for a second I can't breath.

"I... I will...", I can barely make out the words, "...I will have Justice, I will... I will have Justice". An echo that is not natural at all for the room is spreading, making me hear the words over and over again, just more twisted. I'm pretty sure the minotaur has left the room now, for I can't hear the breathings anymore. Yet I just keep standing in my cramped space, shaking. It was something with those words, like they have been haunting my thoughts for a while, but right now I just can't remember why.

I'm picking in my food with my fork, not able to force myself to eat the dry, tasteless fish stew with potatoes.

"Sometimes I wish I was a vegetarian too" I say, looking at Keira's quorn in some kind of cream sauce. She just shrugs her shoulders.

"I'm sure they won't notice if you go take some too. They probably won't make sure you really are a vegetarian. Otherwise I can get you some if you want."

"Nah, it's okay, I'm not very hungry. I think I'll just have a sandwich."

"If you say so" she says, then adding, "Have you got any idea where Mark is? He should be here by now!" I look around, but I can't spot him neither in the line nor at any table. However I can see Mary sitting with her "new" friends some tables away. She stopped hanging out with us when Sofie moved, just some weeks after the horrible incident with David.

Actually Sofie's moving had little to do with that night, her parents had wanted to leave town for quite a long time, but it was like a trigger. Who knew, maybe their daughter could be the next victim? That was if David was murdered of course, no one really knows what happened that night. The doctors said that David had been poisoned, and that it looked like a murder - no one could get such high doses of that poison in them by mistake. The police made a visit to Mary's house, searching for any clues. They also interrogated everyone that had been at the party, especially Mary and her sister. Mary had a really hard time, she was not only the main suspect (I mean she was the one making and giving David drinks) but also were her parents, despite the fact that their daughter probably was in trauma from one of her best friends being killed, mad at Mary for holding parties at their house. The fact that it was me and Keira who had told the police this wasn't the first party at Mary's house made Mary blame us for her parents being so mad. That, together with the fact that Sophie had moved and of course David's fate as well, was probably the reasons why Mary decided to find herself some new friends.

I try not to be sad about it, and actually, I'm more mad. Mary has been completely ignoring us since she got a place around her new friends table. She doesn't answer us on kik and snapchat anymore and has left our instagram group. The last thing she said to me and Keira was that we "probably shouldn't be friends anymore".

The only one of us who can speak with her is Mark. Mary has always had a crush on him and I can tell he feels the same. But not even he could put the group back together again, and right now he is with Mary sometimes and with us the other times.

"Well, do you see him or not?" Keira says and I realize I've been somewhere else.

"Nope" I say, just about to turn my head back, when I see a familiar figure. "Or wait a second I think he just came in!" Mark has seen us, and is heading

straight to our table, without getting any food. “But he doesn’t have any food with him” I turn my head back, “Which”, I add, “is not very strange since this isn’t very good.” I pick in the food again with my fork.

“But he always eats the food” Keira says, concerned. I don’t answer, because Mark is here now.

“Hi” he says, with a not very happy tone.

“Hi” both I and Keira say, exchanging a look, Mark seems to be pretty down. We wait for him to take a seat, but he just stands there.

“Is everything alright Mark?” Keira gently asks. He ignores the question.

“Have you ever wondered who killed David?” Keira and I freeze. Oh no, why is he bringing that up.

“Of course we have, why do you ...” Keira begins.

“I mean have you ever *thought* about it, for real? I mean, the poison can’t have been in the orange drink, because you drank one too and didn’t get poisoned. Yet the poison was a liquid, so it must have been a liquid that only David drank that was poisoned.” He turns to Keira. “The glass of water you gave him. He said it tasted weir...”

“Are you saying Keira poisoned David?! You are out of your mind if you think...” I explode in anger, how can he think *Keira* has killed David. Not only wouldn’t Keira hurt a fly, David and her were *friends*. They had been for years and usually came along really good.

Keira seems to have lost her ability to talk, she just stares at Mark with a surprised look.

“I’m just saying all the evidence is pointing at that!” For some reason he looks a little humiliated, which only makes me more mad.

“You know the water in Mary’s house sometimes taste like that! It’s nothing strange! Now Keira wouldn’t have ... *killed* David, they were friends for god’s sake!”

“Do you remember that argue they had some days before the party? If you think about it she is the biggest suspect!” I am about to interrupt him again, but he ignores me. “For who else should have killed him? Mary’s sister or her friends? *They didn’t even know him!* Or what, are you going to say that he wasn’t murdered, that he just fell down dead!?”

“Look I don’t know what happened, but...”

“Well I do now” and even though he isn’t looking at me anymore, but at Keira, his words, said with such a dark and hateful voice, sends real shivers down my spine, he say “And I will have justice”.

I don’t know how long I stand in that wardrobe, for even though it’s a little crampy, I can’t motivate myself enough to get out of there.

When I finally succeeds to force myself out of there I move my flashlight so I’ll be able to see, only to realize the batteries are almost out. I look in my pockets and find one battery. If I remember right flashlights require two. I really don’t want my flashlight to go out, for since there is no other light in this building it would be completely dark. So I decide to hurry to find some batteries.

Before I leave the wardrobe I listen carefully for noises, but I hear nothing.

I quietly walk to the door, taking the key which I in panic left in the keyhole. I walk through some random doors, into some random rooms, listening carefully all the time. Nothing happens. In a room that looks a little like an office I find a purple key, but it seems almost no doors are purple, so I’m not entirely sure if it will be of any use.

As I walk I start thinking of how to end this thing, this nightmare. I have several memories of me being killed by the monsters, but I don’t think that has happened every night. I also remember actually tricking some monsters - locking them in rooms they can’t escape from. The memory comes to me as I

pass a room with only green doors. If I somehow could get the snake monster in here and lock all the doors, it wouldn't be able to escape.

While I look around to investigate where the doors lead to my flashlight fades more and more, and now it has even started flickering. Suddenly I feel a little panicky; I don't think my flashlight has ever gone out before.

I search every drawer I can find, but they are all empty or full of unnecessary things. In desperation I even try changing only one battery, but in vain; the flashlight is still almost dead. After two more rooms I run into a loom, dark corridor. For a moment I hesitate, I can't see the end of the corridor and my instinct tells me this is a bad idea. I'm just about to turn back when a loud eagle scream fills the air.

I turn my head around and spot two glowing blue eyes getting closer very fast.

There is no time to think.

I rapidly jump back through the door I came from, closing it with a slam. The door is still unlocked when the nose diving bird monster flies by. It seems to have too high speed to turn fast enough and catch me. I immediately take advantage of that, locking the door while it slows down, flapping it's wings.

The door handle is blue and so is the monster, but I still decide to leave this room instead of standing here waiting for the monster to come back to the door, hacking on it with it's beak only to realize it can't open it and then leave. I don't have time for that, and also I still don't like the long looming corridor. There are more uninvestigated rooms not connected to this corridor and maybe in some of them I'll find batteries.

I walk through two more dark rooms without any luck and suddenly my flashlight dies completely. I try to turn it on again, but it doesn't work.

A little moan escape my lips as I continue my search for batteries in the complete darkness. It's harder than I expected, especially since I can't see the

color of neither the doors nor my keys, making it quite difficult to open them. It doesn't get better when I suddenly hear a strange sound I've *never* heard before. It sounds a little metallic and humming, and for some reason it freaks me out.

The sound is only getting louder and louder and I hurry up trying to find some batteries.

I feel the panic coming closer and closer.

I almost fall over as I walk straight into a chest of drawers, but I quickly restore my balance and violently start opening drawers. The noise is getting even louder, and I know the monster is almost here. I think I hear a distant hissing sound too, but I don't really care, I'm much more scared about the new monster.

I'm just about to abandon my mission and just run in blind, hoping to find a door and lock it, when I see something coming right out of the opposing wall, like it really was a ghost.

I see a purple glowing eye, followed by a dark purple body, actually visible in the complete darkness. I can't make out what the monster really looks like, but I'd describe it as a mess: The mouth is crooked and full of small black teeth and the arms doesn't look the same, one is short and has a hand with maybe ten fingers while the other is long with two or three fingers.

But what's creeping me out the most is the eyes.

Of the two eyes, only one is glowing and purple. One eye is much smaller than the other, and continuously looking at different directions, like it was out of control. The other stares right at me, no almost *inside* me - like it knew everything about me.

The monster is also slow, which somehow makes the panic I feel get bigger. It's like I'm in a trans, not knowing where to go or what to do. By instinct I take a slow step backwards, right into the chest of drawers. In order not to fall again I place my hand on it, and it can feel a little box.

Is that... I tear the cardboard up, finding what I most in the whole world wanted to see right now.

Batteries.

The trans is broken, but still in panic and fear, I unpack the batteries, putting one of them alongside the other functioning battery in my flashlight.

The light goes on again at full intensity and the metallic sound around me suddenly fades. For the first time I see the room. It's empty except for two chest of drawers, an armchair and a bookshelf.

A little in panic and very confused I look around, searching for the monster. But the sound is gone and the creature is nowhere to be seen.

“Beep beep beep beep”

I run into the clean, white hospital room, seeing Keira lie in her bed.

“Oh my god Keira, I was so scared when I heard...” My voice fades as I see her face. She looks so sad and very ashamed. I'm relieved to see her, the doctors told me she were alive and okay, but I still couldn't believe it until I saw it with my own eyes. When the police called me to say Keira had tried to commit suicide, I first couldn't believe it. Yes, I know she was sad about everything that happened, and even though she denied it, Mark blaming her for the murder really hurt her. But I never thought that she could be so sad and hurt she wanted to take her own life.

I run to the big bed and, not caring about the drop and all other medical things connected to her, I hug her. She hugs me too, even if it is a little half-hearted. She is probably feeling too guilty over that she almost left me. And honestly, I don't know how I could have survived another of my closest friends deaths. It was only some months since David went away.

A part of me is feeling sad and almost betrayed over how she could do this to me, just leave me when we were going through these hard times together. After all, she is the only friend I have left. Yet I can't be mad at her, seeing her this broken. Knowing that she is so hurt inside she doesn't want to live only make me feel sorry for her, I really want to help her.

"Keira, please don't do that again" I whisper behind my tears. I didn't even notice I cried. Behind my eyes full of tears, I see how Keira looks at me with a glare telling how sad she is.

"I'm sorry" is all she say. But the way she says it makes my blood freeze a little:

I don't know whether she is implying she is sorry for all that happened, or sorry for that it will happen again.

I've never seen a monster like that before, I think it was my flashlight going out that triggered the purple thing to attack me. I put the rest of the batteries from the little box in my pockets, promising myself to never let the flashlight go out again. Suddenly I'm aware of a hissing sound somewhere not too far away.

Not sure whether to be happy or frightened I hesitate. I know I have to lock the monsters in in order to end this nightmare, but if I try and fail they might kill me.

Using all my will, I force myself to go in the direction of the hissings. When they become too loud I stop. There is a door in front of me, and I know for sure the snake is in the room behind it.

I really don't want to do this.

Using all determination I've got I open the door.

Even though I knew the snake monster should be there my heart skips a beat when I see it turning towards me. The snake starts running and so do I.

I'm scared to the bone, but I'm not panicking, for I think I have everything under control. I know the path, I left all the doors I'd have to run through unlocked and open, so I wouldn't have to take the time to unlock them if I would be in a hurry.

As I run, I look over my shoulder a few times, just to make sure the snake monster is still following me. The monster is actually pretty slow, it runs in maybe the speed I'd jog, so I slow down a little, but I still keep a so big distance between us as possible.

It all goes very well, and I find the room with the three green doors on the first try. I run into it, checking that the snake is still after me, and then run to the door on the opposite side of the room, taking the green key out of my pocket. I want the snake monster to see me before I close the door, just to make sure it will stay there for a while, banging on the door trying to open it.

When I see the glowing eyes I quickly shut and lock the door. As soon as I hear banging on it and angry hissings, I run as fast as I can, through four rooms, back to the door I entered the room in.

The snake must have heard me, for it stops banging and turns around, looking both angry and a little confused. Before it gets time to leap at me I shut the door and lock it. The third door is already locked, so the monster is trapped.

A feeling of victory is spreading inside me, and I'm suddenly feeling really proud of myself. I actually did it! It's not until now I notice how my heart is pounding and how much adrenaline there is in my blood. With a feeling of hope - I may actually be able to do this, I start walking. I go to rooms I've never gone to before, in order to find a room with only one color of the doors.

I actually start feeling a little calm and less scared, when I suddenly hear minotaur breathings from pretty far away. The sound is getting louder and louder, and a fearful feeling is spreading inside of me.

I walk a bit faster.

I go through a blue door, and suddenly I'm back in the corridor where I started.

Since I don't want to bump into the minotaur and see no point in going back to the bedroom I started in, there is only one way to go. I turn left and follow the corridor, but after only a few steps I stop.

There is a sound coming from the living room at the end of the corridor, that I've never heard earlier this night, and it's freezing the blood in my veins to ice.

Everything gets a little darker - something that has nothing to do with the flashlight. There is a figure approaching at the other side of the corridor, about 20 feet away. I recognise this monster - every time I close my eyes I see it, in one shape or another. The skeleton has spotted me, and is slowly heading towards where I stand.

I turn around, my heart beating as fast as it probably can and my panic rising as I start running.

By instinct I don't go into the room I just came from, for I know that the minotaur might be there. As soon as I enter the bedroom I realize my mistake: There is absolutely no place to hide in here, and the door handle is red - it won't keep the skeleton out.

I'm about to turn back and run to the door I rejected, it would definitely grant me a greater chance to survive, when I realize how close the skeleton is.

No way I'll reach that door.

So I run into the bedroom, locking the door behind me. I try to ignore the bangings on it as I try to think.

Can I hide under the duvet?

No, it wouldn't work, just make it more scary.

I don't think I can fit under the bed either, so I look around to find something else. The wardrobe is way too small and also filled with clothes and it's stupid to

even think the skeleton wouldn't spot me under the desk. I don't see how the chest of drawers would be of any help either.

The banging continues and I know it's only a matter of seconds before the door will open. I realize I'm shaking with fear and desperately try to calm myself down; I need to come up with something, and I can't do that if I'm panicking.

Closing my eyes, I try to come up with something, but every time the monster bangs on the door, a wave of fear rises inside me.

Frustrated I walk as far away from the door as possible, and I end up sitting in the corner of my room on my bed, at the exact same point as I started. I wonder; if I could let the skeleton come close to me as I sit here, could I try running around it and get to the door without it catching me? Probably not, it seems to be really hard and nearly impossible, and I know there's probably no way that it would work.

Suddenly I give up.

All will to run and fight to survive is gone.

I accept that I'll die.

I rest my head on the wall for a second, not feeling panic nor fear anymore. I actually don't feel anything, I'm just tired. Somewhere in my mind I know that I won't die anyway, I guess I've known all along that this is just a dream. But there is something with these monsters, like they are real. I know there must be more to this than it all just being a returning nightmare.

My tired eyes catches something: The picture of me and David. It's turned around since I didn't want to look at it in the beginning of the dream. I grab it and slowly turn it around.

The picture is showing me and David, smiling and holding each other's hands. It was taken at my summer cottage, almost a year ago, and I've had it in a frame in my room since then. It must have been the happiest time of my life, for I'd

convinced David to come with me and my family to the cottage for a week. A week with only him and me.

I surprise myself to actually smile when I look at the picture. In almost two months this picture has caused me nothing else than sadness and pain, and so I've tried to ignore it, just as I've tried to push down all the bad feelings I've felt the recent days. The sadness is still there, I miss the time at the picture with my whole heart. But this time I stop trying to reach the surface of the sea of sadness, afraid to drown, and instead I let myself sink.

A tear is falling down my cheek and before I know I'm crying so much my heart hurts. I barely react when the door smashes up and the skeleton comes in. Sobbing, I slowly let my eyes leave the picture and I look at the monster. For the first time I feel no fear when I see it, only more pain and sorrow.

I look behind the unnatural yellow glowing pupils, at the black, deep eye sockets and suddenly realize a thing I should have realized a long time ago: The skeleton isn't a random monster created by my brain haunting me in my nightmares. It is a reflection of the sorrow I feel and try to push down when I think about David. And it's not hunting my nightmares only; it's hunting me during both day and night, all the time.

The skeleton has stopped. Still looking in it's eyes I feel my heart aching and tears falling, but still I feel no fear against it.

Suddenly the monster starts fading, and as I cry even more, it's gone.

I search the drawers in the dark bedroom, still fascinated how much it looks like my own. I figured, if the skeleton was a reflection of David, the other monsters should be reflections of the other friends that I've lost. So, if I could use the photo to turn my memories of David from dark and sad, to brighter and happier ones, I should be able to find something for the other monsters as well.

In the drawer of my bedside cabinet I find a postcard from Sofie, who must have been the blue bird I saw once this night. The postcard pushes down the

feeling that I miss her since I know I can still keep contact with her, by kik or skype. Maybe I can even meet her in real life soon.

I find a very old “best friends forever” bracelet from Mary, reminding me of all the times in our past she’s been mad at me, and hung with other people for a while. All the time she just needed some time, and I know that’s the case this time as well. She will come to her senses, and when she does I know I’ll forgive her. She must have been the snake, because that sly and malicious look in the monster’s eyes reflects all the negative things I think about her right now.

In the chest of drawers I find a plush toy that always would comfort and cheer me up when nothing else would when I was little. It makes me think that, if I only find the right way, I *will* cheer up Keira. She must have been the purple mess of a monster I saw first tonight.

I have a lot of trouble finding something for Mark, who must have been the angry and mad minotaur, until I see a small photo of a person lying at the bottom of the last drawer. Everything falls together as I pick it up and I’m filled with both determination and anger. There is no need for Mark to be mad at me and Keira.

I think I know who the murderer is.

Beep beep, beep beep!

I’m wide awake the moment the alarm starts beeping, which is pretty unlike me, and I quickly shut it off. It feels like I remember everything that happened this night, though I probably don’t. The photo of David and me is on the bedside cabinet, just as it was in my room in the dream, and as it has been since even before the incident. I miss the time of when the picture was taken, like I always do.

Suddenly I’m filled with determination and I know I’ll never have to be afraid of turning the lights of anymore after this night.

I’m going to make everything right again.