

National Novel Month Write-In

November 13, 2019

PROMPT: It's your first night at the haunted house and your door shuts and locks itself. There's a ghost in the room with you, and it's trying to keep something else out.

[Untitled]

by A. N. A.

“6th street, 82nd, 84th,...86.”

There was no point in counting. The house looked nothing like the rest. Felt nothing like the rest. The grass was dead, the front door hanging by one hinge, and the siding marred and aged.

My foot sunk into the grass. Two steps, three steps in—a wall of cold smacked my face. The air easily dropped 10 degrees; it no longer felt like autumn. I shoved my hands in my pockets and cautiously approached the front door, expecting another temperature drop.

A breeze gently teased me, lifting and tousling the hair on my head. I didn't shiver nearly as much as the house. A shingle fell—cracking at my feet. Harsh.

The door ground open and the floorboards creaked in protest as I entered. I stopped, gently closing the door behind me and called, “I know you're here.”

The resident remained silent. The house stilled. The air even felt slightly warmer —but it was too late. It couldn't hide.

I treaded through a dusty kitchen with missing cabinet doors, through a living room with a torn brown couch, and up a staircase that creaked every step.

The second floor had four rooms. I ignored the first three, entering the last door onto a plush red carpet.

Slam!

The door shut behind me, and the carpet moved, becoming alive. “Hey!” I yelled, being rolled into a red burrito.

A pale face with blue saucers for eyes appeared, face twisted and hideous, spewing white clouds of frost. She'll freeze me to death—it was a mistake to come here. But she passed her hissing and faintly muttered.

“You’re not him.”

“Who?” I asked. “You’re the spirit that haunts this house.”

What would a ghost have to be afraid of? A supernatural enthusiast? Impossible. An exorcist. Perhaps. But she no longer cared what I was. The carpet loosened and unraveled as the spirit flowed to the door, slamming it shut.

“What are you doing?” I asked, blinking. Wasn’t the ghost supposed to fear me?

“Quiet!” she hissed, head spinning as frost spread across the ground.

Knock knock knock.

I froze—not because of the spirit, for she hung in the air, frozen stiff.

Knock knock knock.

I shifted and squirmed, freeing myself from the carpet and stood. Stepping towards the door, I reached out to grab the door handle. The spirit’s eyes flashed. A small white hand smacked mine, throwing me off balance and onto the ground.

The door rattled, the spirit trembled. She backed at the door, me, and flew into the corner of the room.

Knock knock—bang!

The door flew open, allowing for a putrid green mist to fill the air. A demonic spirit shifted into the room, ink-black eyes pointed at the small spirit. She shrieked. The demon lurched forward, hissing with delight, it found its prey. Its feast.

“I found you.”

A toothy grin spread across my face. Before its claws could touch the spirit, I grabbed the demon by its neck.

Its eyes rolled across its head, blinking—reflecting blue flames. The flames grew, burning the green mist into a purple smoke. The creature screeched, reaching for my neck with crooked arms and twisting limbs quickly extending from its ethereal form.

But it burned too fast, becoming nothing more than a haunting memory.

A long moment passed before I lowered my hand. The child looked at me with pale, unblinking eyes. I smirked and stepped over the carpet, leaving the room. The house hardly shuddered; the floorboards didn't squeak.

I smirked, descending the staircase and pulled out a small list. A red slash.

“On to the next one.”