



# The Haunted House



Sarah stood on the overgrown lawn, grass tickling her knees and weeds grabbing at her scuffed Converse. The house loomed over her, casting a dark shadow over her small face. The house seemed to sway in the summer nights breeze, all of its rotting features humming with content. It's alive; she thought, and nobody could change her mind about that. Sarah breathed in deeply, the air catching down her throat. She choked and doubled over coughing. When it was over after what felt like forever, she darted her eyes praying that nothing had heard her. Her head swiveled from left to right, the dark street etching down either side in suburban houses all identical, the only light, the flickering of the dimly lit streetlamps. She sighed softly, letting out puff of air.

After much contemplation, Sarah took a harrowing step towards the door, beckoning her into its gaping mouth. Before she realized it, her feet had led her all the way to the door and one of her hands was already reaching forwards to close around the rusting doorknob. She turned the handle with a sickening crunch and the door came ajar. As she pushed the door open, fear flooded her lungs, an almost drowning sensation.

The creak of a musty floorboard sent shivers down her spine and her heart skipped a beat (more like 5). Sarah perched on the tips of her toes, poised almost like a lion ready to pounce on its prey. Thoughts raced through her mind at a thousand miles per hour and she felt herself falling into the abyss of her mind. Then a sound seemed to rip her from her anxieties and present her with new ones. "Sarah?" A soft whisper, barely audible but seemingly loud in the silent hallway, slithered into her ears, sending pulses of fear pumping through her ostensibly small body. She squeezed her eyes shut, as tightly as they would go, not wanting to be here anymore. "Sarah," the whisper came again, closer this time. And that's when she noticed the proximity was off, and she gasped in horror.

Suddenly a chorus of the unpleasant whispers shattered the quiet and they were all spilling from Sarah's tongue. She tried to scream but it was like someone had torn out her voice box, for as she screamed, pain seared through her. She reached blindly for something, anything. Finally, her fingers found a light dangling in front of her, and she yanked on the chain, a sharp pop as the light actually turned on. She blinked the white spots from her teary eyes and waited for the harsh light to calm. She slowly opened them, taking a peek, and glancing around the still mostly dark corridor. Sarah glimpsed at the ground and did a double take. She wondered why she was casting two shadows. Afterall, there was only one lightbulb.