“Hey, Jack. Did you hear about that one rumor in school?”

I was walking to school when the devil—excuse me—my childhood friend, Mary, chose a strange topic.

“About that killer?”

“Yeah! Don’t you think it’s exciting?”

A blessing she might be, her unique tastes never fail to amaze me.

“I don’t want anything to do with scary things like that. This is a small and peaceful town. We can do without infuriating political struggles, much less with phantom serial killers.”

“Oh, come on! Live a little! A cloaked figure that appears whenever darkness comes and lays waste to the lands! Don’t you think that’s cool!?”

“The only people that should be saying that are delusional geeks who watched a bit too much fantasy. Mary, I’ll say it once and never again, I don’t want to do anything with them, and neither should you!”

“Aww, you’re no fun, Jack!”

I can never get this side of her. She’s usually so nice and comforting but whenever topics like this come up, she always goes off the rails. Perhaps because of that, I sometimes get strange thoughts that this town we live in is just as eerie as it is quiet and peaceful.

Why? Well, that’s because later that day when I was in the middle of my walk home in my lonesome, the ominous rain clouds appeared over my head. Just as I was about to run, I found myself face to face with a suspicious cloaked man—a killer, I thought.

Just as I tried to turn back the other way and make a break for it, he took out a black object and thrust it into my chest.

I’m dead.

That was the last thought I had before I braced myself for the inevitable impact. But, even after that, I found myself breathing and living just fine. When I gingerly opened my eyes, I found the cloaked man’s back walking into the distance. On my chest was a black object… black licorice.

“Haaaahh….”

I heaved a sigh of relief as I realized it was something as trivial as this. Thinking about it, Halloween was right around the corner; tomorrow, in fact. Although, that was a very scary way of giving people candy. Maybe that was their aim from the beginning? Taking advantage of baseless rumors to do pranks like this. Well, I can’t say this was my first rodeo with events such as this…

Last year, the town was covered in a sudden fog. Back then, instead of thinking I was stabbed in the chest, I was actually beheaded and I saw my decapitated body from a different angle. Even farther into the past, I was held back at school and had to walk home through the night. At that time, I was kidnapped and buried alive in the nearby forest. Of course, all of those were nothing but misunderstandings because I was daydreaming. Curiously enough, all of them happened on the same day as this little incident.

When did this start, I wonder?

Thinking about it now, the very first horrifying daydream I had was when I tried to call for Bloody Mary as a punishment for losing a bet with my friends. That’s right… on that fateful day, when I performed the ritual inside the bathroom with the lights out with only a candle in hand… I called out in front of the mirror…

I chanted…

“Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary…!”

Through the reflection appeared a girl I knew all too well. My childhood friend… the devil—

“Jack! What are you spacing out for?”

“—Whuh!? What!? Who!?”

The next thing I knew, Mary was standing right in front of me, waving her hand at me… why? What happened?

“Jeez, I always need to remind you to focus on your food while eating! You’re so silly!”

“O-Oh… Y-Yeah, of course…”

I didn’t notice when, but I was in front of the dinner table with Mary. Was that what happened? I can’t help but think that I’m missing something very important…

“Wait here, I need to get something done. Oh, and I’m taking this with me!”

“H-Hey! What do you need my glasses for!?”

The last thing Jack saw was Mary’s figure disappearing into the corner of the hallway. Unbeknownst to him, Mary took the glasses to the bathroom and wore them in front of the mirror.

“Hey! Nice to meet you! Were you scared for Jack there?”

She was talking to her reflection… no… she was talking to…

“You! Yeah, You, the very person reading through the Archive! Can you stop peaking into our lives? I can’t have you messing with my life here! Your presence is making him remember the memories I erased from his mind… huh? Those were all real, you ask? Of course, they were! It’s not every day I can get a vessel as compatible as Jack to manifest my spirit into the living realm so I’m enjoying my time while I can!”

A frightening being she was. Much unlike her beautiful visage, the reflection in the mirror showed nothing but a body ruined by scratches and blood. Her sanguine eyes were like a window to her dark, tainted soul that stared into my very own through my eyes that were the glasses.

“There’s nothing scarier than having someone like you peek into our lives! You have the power to change our realities to fantasy and fantasy to reality, I don’t want someone like you here!”

Such sophistry. Despite her doing the exact same to Jack, she complains when the same might be done to her.

“Close your book and find other lives to ruin! bEgOnE!”

Rage distorted her voice, breaking the mirror and spreading her reflection into different fragments…

That was the last scene before the glasses she wore broke. The illusion of fantasy and reality… I wonder which is scarier, living a life that’s a complete lie like Jack or facing that dark reality… What say you, fellow Archiver?