

## An Unusual Scar

I took a seat at the kitchen counter, casually talking to my mom as she went about her daily routine. I had asked her if she wanted help, but she denied me such access. She kept going on about how happy she was that I was visiting, joking about college taking me away from her. As always, it was just another day when the memory started creeping its head around a corner in my head. No rhyme, no rhythm. Perhaps being around my family again sparked it. Whatever the reason, it did not matter anymore; it was back to haunt me again.

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Not ten minutes earlier, I was told not to do it. She told me as I laid my head down for the day, waiting for the familiar darkness to return once again. The lights went out as she turned around the corner, and there it was. I stared up above and reflected, imagined, prayed. I toyed with the taste in my mouth as I repeated to myself: I will remember, I will remember, I will remember... I forgot. The comfortable veil of dark blues and purples was soon distant from my perception, and in its absence, curtains of black prepped the stage.

The man stands tall, his violet skin illuminating my fear. The class he wears over his slim design gives him a sense of professional horror. Lightning screams, and the glass over his right, beady eye responds with pleasure. Closer... closer... his head crawls towards mine. The teeth chatter unnaturally, without breath between them. Closer... closer... His mustache gives the grin of his soul, and my body receives the chill of his heart. Closer... closer...

I suddenly returned to the sight of creeping yellow rays, now sitting up, only realizing so after attending to my breathing. While my heart rate dropped, so did the naked stick as it landed in my lap. I then realized its absence in my mouth, and then my forgetfulness. She had told me not to do it. I took the recent event as a direct consequence, although, looking back, I'm sure that she was concerned with a consequence of higher gravity.

From that time onward, I vowed to never again fall asleep with a lollipop in my mouth, or any sweet for that matter. Back then, I attributed the sugar I was supposedly consuming in my sleep to be the cause of the hyperactive nightmare. To this day, that experience has not been forgotten, and the vivid image from that terror still lingers in my mind. It's silly how these types of things can stick around, even when you wouldn't find them as frightening if they occurred now.

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Mom asked if I was okay. I gave her a casual yes. I chuckled to myself as I looked down at my twiddling thumbs. After some pause, I asked her if she remembered that time, back in Chicago, in our tiny apartment. Of course she didn't, not that I was surprised. Everyone else in that apartment had a regular night. We laughed about it as we conversed, amused by the absurdity of it all. I sat and wondered why I still couldn't forget. The fear had left, so why not the memory?