

When I reached the top of the stairway, I slammed it shut and leaned against it, panting heavily. The roar of the rain was back, but I could tell that it was gradually fading from what it was before I went downstairs. Or maybe it was just my rapid heartbeat blocking out the sound. It was still pitch black in the house, but now I was able to look around and see, maybe my eyes had finally adjusted; maybe my fear had made my pupils dilate more than they were before. I didn't care, I was just glad to be able to see. Until I looked around. It was the same house I had seen my whole life, but it was... different. (1:15)

---

I could see that part of the reason it was so dark was that the windows were boarded up. A layer of dust coated the walls and floor, and that was all that was there. None of the furniture or pictures remained. Shelves were empty, the TV and recliner were no longer in the living room, visible through a half-open door at the end of the hall. I locked the basement door and took a small, caution step forward and immediately winced. I looked down and cursed again. In my rush I had apparently dropped my mug and stepped on one of the pieces; just like I knew would happen. It wasn't a deep cut and was barely bleeding, but it hurt now that my adrenaline was fading. What had I been so scared of before? (0:43)

---

I must be extra jumpy from my lack of sleep this week. The basement was mostly just storage, nothing could get in there. I was just about to turn back around to get the lamps again when I felt it: the fear was coming back. I couldn't remember what the thing in the basement was, just that I had to get away. (0:19)

---

I could feel that this thing was right behind the door, and that it wanted me. I immediately broke into a sprint to the kitchen window since it was the closest way out of there. I didn't care where I ended up as long as I was away from here. The pain in my foot was inconsequential now and I ignored it as I ran. I didn't even notice the small trail of blood following wherever I went. There were no other emotions that fear. I had to escape.

It was no good, the kitchen window was boarded up too tightly to squeeze through. Changing plans, I hurried towards the front door at the opposite end of the house, making sure to cut through the living room to avoid the basement, but that was also boarded up. I fumbled with the lock, trying to get it open and pry off the boards on the outside. The rain seemed excruciating loud, but I could almost taste safety on the other side of the door.

CRASH! (0:54)

---

The basement door broke open with a crack much louder than any of the thunder I'd heard so far. Giving up on the door, I immediately ran up the stairs to my left to the second floor. Knowing whatever it was would only be a few moments behind me I wished I had another door to shut to slow it down, if only for a second. As I ran, I could hear the rain on the roof crescendo.