Shadows

It’s actually quite interesting to think about what the night can do. The simple absence of natural light can shift your perspective and turn an innocent garden into a deadly maze or a bustling amusement park into an abandoned death trap. Or in my case it can turn the twisting halls of my new digs from a comfortable two bedroom house into the living embodiment of my worst fears.

There really is nothing like the jolt of ecstasy which comes from hearing a thud in the night when you’re supposed to be home alone. For me that feeling gets mixed with a shiver up my spine and my skin going on alert, like it expects me to get attacked from all angles, to form a twisted cocktail of fear that courses through my body and shifts my brain into paranoid mode.

And no, I am not overreacting. It’s always easy to think like that in the day time but seriously, you try waking up at 2 am to a banging sound coming from somewhere in your supposedly empty house and then sit there and judge me. The truth is that the shadows would make cowards of us all in that situation.

Creeping down the hallway, I had to try my best not to imagine the events of some God-awful horror movie happening to me. Like Jason Voorhees was standing at the end of the passage just waiting for me to come within striking distance. Waiting for me to act like the good little lamb who took the most direct and efficient route to the slaughter. Well fuck you Jason, I have a hockey stick. And nothing else. Yep I’m probably screwed.

It’s funny how the very corridors that my roommate and I had carted our furniture through just yesterday afternoon took on a whole different meaning when they were cloaked in blackness. Now they possessed a malevolence. Now they were bathed in natural darkness with corners of light appearing every so often when a car went past the house. The very halls in which Jules and I had joked about fighting each other for the better of the two bedrooms now stood as a blackened obstacle course, a literal valley where death could spring out from any corner.

It felt like the shadows themselves were closing in on - Oh for shit’s sake Piper. Pull yourself together. They’re just shadows and it is just darkness. You are an adult. Deal with it.

Okay. Okay. I’m calm. I’m calm.

Placing one bare foot in front of the other, I was careful to minimize my sound output as I started down the passage and into the cave’s entrance. I could almost see him waiting for me, sitting on the couch and staring out at me from under that goalie mask with his machete perfectly balanced over his shoulder. Still I pressed on.

If I wasn’t so goddamn scared I would have switched the light on at this point but the lounge was where the sound came from and that was my destination. Honestly I don’t know whether it was out of fear or a sense of self-preservation that I had wanted to do it. My plan had been to catch whoever had broken in by surprise then beat the shit out of them and then call the cops. In that order. Besides I had a hockey stick, right? What could possibly go wrong? Yeah you don’t have to say it - Jason would so totally kill me if this were Friday the 13th.

But the thing is that this wasn’t Friday the 13th and I was not going to die. Or that was what I told myself as I finally got to the end of the corridor – seriously how long was that thing? I crouched down on the carpet and attempted to do my best assassin impersonation as I made my way over to the light switch. Okay. Now or never. I flicked the switch and the shadows disappeared.

It’s actually quite interesting to think about what the night can do. It’s also equally funny to think about that during the day. It almost seems preposterous and certainly seems down-right silly. And yet as I scanned the room, my Kookaburra stick raised, I realized how stupid I just been.

As the artificial light revealed the source of the sound, I dropped my stick and face-palmed. It was in the position of lying on the couch with a hornet’s nest for hair with what looked like bile remnants in the corner of its mouth. Clad in a red dress and fuck-me heels was my resident roommate, returned early from her trip out of town.

Julia, bless her heart, was far too deep in her sleep to hear anything I did, so I got her a blanket and left her be. As I turned off the lights I felt the shadows closing in once again. Though this time I smiled and walked through the passage on my way back to bed.

**Paul Cupido**