Diana was walking along the sidewalk, just like any normal day. Walking to school was an everyday thing for her, something that she did quite often when her mom went off to work earlier than normal. Typical doctor things, her mother would say to her, and nothing that you should concern yourself about too much. So Diana hardly ever questioned it, thinking it away as it being a work related thing. The one thing that she did look forward to was meeting her best friend Isabel on the way.

Diana had first met Isabel when she moved from Boston to this small town of Fresno and she sat next to her in English. Both immediately hit it off, expressing their weird love for Shakespeare that no one else could ever understand. And from that moment, they became best friends. To Diana, Shakespeare gave her an escape from her normal boring life and inspired her to write her own short stories, mainly about the dreams that she would have throughout the day. Everything from her prince on a white horse to a ghost chasing her down the hallway, she wrote it out into her daily diary which now was a collection of all of her short stories (or dreams).

This particular day, Diana had a feeling that something new was going to come to her. It was a nagging feel deep in her heart, something she hadn’t felt before. Something that told her a new experience was coming her way. So she took the diary along with her.

“What’s that thing you’re carrying around”, Isabel asked. Isabel knew almost everything about Diana. Everything except for the diary. “Oh nothing big. Just a new notebook for school that I grabbed from my room before I left. Didn’t have the time to put it in my backpack so I just held it.” Diana tried to steer her conversation away from her secret diary and distracted Isabel by asking her about typical boy things, stuff that Isabel could go on and on about.

While Isabel was talking away, Diana saw something from the corner of her eye which caught her attention. She had never seen it before, so it creeped her out when she did notice it. To her, it seemed like the garden gnome from Mrs. Stevenson’s garden was following her with her eyes. “Diana! What are you doing?” Diana looks up and sees Isabel was quite a way ahead of her, with a questioning look. She didn’t realize that she stopped and was fully staring back at the garden gnome, which she still felt was staring back at her. “Nothing. I just never noticed that weird looking gnome before. Have you?” Isabel responded,” No but seems typical of Mrs. Stevenson to get something new to attract more attention to her garden. You already know how competitive she is with the neighborhood garden award.”

As they both were walking away, with Isabel continuing her story about some new guy she found, Diana turned and looked back at the gnome.

This time it was staring right at her.

Sitting in English, she sat all the way in the back, which was unusual for her since she sat in the front since day 1. No one seemed to notice or care, so she opened her diary and wrote about a daydream she had about the gnome in Biology. It was about the gnome suddenly coming to life and taking over the neighborhood, eventually taking over the town. As she flipped through her past stories, her eyes caught something that she didn’t remember writing down but was clearly written in her handwriting.

Turning back to the page and looking through each, she found it. The word “gnome” was staring at her. Just like the gnome in the garden. As she started reading her passage for that particular day, her blood ran cold.

In that entry, she wrote about that specific gnome and how she felt its eyes following her. Every single detail in that entry matched up with what happened on her way to school with Isabel. Even what Isabel said to her. ‘I don’t ever remember writing this’, she thought to herself. As she started flipping through other past entries, she noticed that each one matched up with something that happened to her sometime in her past, but none she remembered writing.

Then she looked at the particular entry that she had just wrote. “The gnome came to life.”

She had made a mistake.