

An unforgettable night

Tick tock. Tick tock.

One second passed. Two seconds. One minute. Ten minutes. Thirty minutes. One hour.

But no one was home.

The clock was about to strike the twelve-hour mark. Nobody was home.

Why? What had happened?

I sat alone, in my comfy bed, hidden underneath the sheets, with Bruno beside me. I had never been alone in my life, but tonight might change that.

I stood up, trying to be as quiet as possible, but my head still felt groggy. But my bed had other plans and groaned loudly. Loud enough that it could be heard throughout the entire house.

“Please don’t,” I whispered, trying to persuade the bed to be quiet.

I looked outside my bedroom window to see the street light, but there was no silver Toyota parked in the driveway. No parents in the house. Nobody in the house. Just me alone at midnight, unable to sleep.

“Where are they? Why are they gone for this long?” I thought, as my heart beat started to rise.

“They will be back soon. They have never been outside the house for this long.” I tried to calm myself down, but was unable to.

Panic flared inside me as I went back to my bed and sat down. My pet-like, stuffed dog Bruno sat beside me as if trying to comfort me. I tried to close my eyes and rest, but flashes came back to my mind, and my eyes popped open. Then, I made up my mind. I would be brave.

I slowly stepped off my bed and tip-toed to my door. The floor squeaked underneath my feet. I reached out for the door handle and slowly opened the door. Creaking, the door finally opened, and outside was a veil of darkness. I only saw the outline of the switch and went for it. As I neared the switch, a chill ran down my back.

Three. Two. One. Here we go.

The lights flared up. But I only had a moment to enjoy it. There was something on the chair. I didn't see what it was, but I didn't wait any longer, screamed and ran back to my room. Shutting the door tightly and locking it. Pushing against it hard, even though it was already locked.

What was that? I questioned myself. *What did I just see?*

But that was not the end of the nightmare. I heard a screeching noise coming from outside and saw a red Subaru as it pulled in front of the driveway.

Who is that? I thought to myself. *We don't have a red car. Nor do we know anyone with a red Subaru. Wait. Is it who I think that is? Are they ...*

"Thieves," I whispered as low as I could.

Panic flared up inside me for a second time. I couldn't let them get what they wanted. This is my house. They don't get to steal things from here. My brain went into the fight-or-flight response, and I rushed outside my door, forgetting what had just happened a second earlier.

The second I opened the door, I remembered the chair. But this time I was not scared because I could see what was really there. It was just a bunch of books with a hat sitting on top of them.

That's what I was afraid of. I thought, laughing at myself. But as soon as I composed myself, I remembered what I was up against. Without any time to lose, I ran to my kitchen to get something with which I could defend myself. As I inspected the kitchen for something helpful, the best thing I could find was a plastic knife and fork.

That's not enough, I told myself.

By this time I could hear the car door opening.

I need to get something fast. But what?

I ran upstairs again and found a stick in the corner of my room. This seemed the best thing I could use at that time. I went outside my room and scanned around. I saw the chair and it gave me a new idea. I ran inside to find a bathrobe and a clothes hanger.

This better work I said to myself.

I climbed the chair and found the curtain rod. I hung the hanger with the bathrobe and closed the light. It had worked; I saw the silhouette of the robe, and it seemed that there was someone big and intimidating at the house.

As the door handle turned, I hid behind the shelf and prayed that nothing would happen. But I had to be ready. I got the stick ready and waited. But the thieves continued to go straight and did not come up the stairs.

How do they know that our chest is hidden downstairs? I whispered to myself. I heard them moving things around, and suddenly they stopped.

“Should we check upstairs?” This confirmed that there was more than one person at the house.

They started to walk towards the stairs, and my heart pounded with their footsteps. But their phone rang and they stopped. They picked up the phone and talked.

“Yeah, we reached. Get home quickly, drive safely, and out of danger. Bye! Wish us luck.”

The conversation ended, and it confirmed my suspicion about the thieves. They came to my house, my house, and told their driver to stay out of trouble and not get caught. What should I do now?

They started walking towards the stairs, and I prepped my brain to get ready, but the second I heard their voices more clearly, something stopped me. I don’t know what the nagging feeling was, but it told me that I knew those people and I became aware of my surroundings and every step they took. But the closer they got the more scared I became. My heart thumping loud against my chest, so loud that everyone at the house should be able to hear it.

3. 2. 1. Showtime.

Holding the stick hard, I rushed to open the lights. The second the lights opened, they took and step back, and then I went forward with my stick, thinking whether I should really hit them or just scare them. But as soon as I became ready to hit them. I locked my eyes with them.

Just for one second. And I became relieved.

They were my parents.

What had just happened?

Twenty minutes later, when the clock struck 1, my parents and I were sitting on the couch and having some food. Then my mom started asking me questions about what I was doing.

“Why were you awake so late at night?” mom questioned.

“Yeah, we already told you that we were going to be out at a party tonight,” dad added.

“You were going to a party? When did you tell me that? I never knew about that!” I added, “I awoke around 10 and tried to search for you guys and you were nowhere to be seen. You always put me to bed so I stayed up hoping you would come back, but then I saw the red car pulling up in our driveway and I had no idea whose car that was. I got scared and thought that those people were thieves, so I hid and was planning to scare them, not knowing that you were the ones getting out of the car.”

My parents just stared at each other and then burst out laughing.

“You thought we were what?” they asked me.

“I...I don't know. I was scared and did not recognize the car you guys came in.” I replied back.

“Kiddo, you have a wild imagination. We left the car at the dealership because it needs some repairs, and your uncle picked us up and took us to the party. I thought we told you about us leaving and not being able to make it home early. Sorry, we scared you.” Dad replied to my question.

“Oh, wait...I remember you were laying on your bed when we told you about us leaving. Maybe you were already asleep and we did not notice it then. Our bad.” Mom added.

“But you have a wild imagination.”

“And... now it's time to go to be again. Come on let's put you to bed.”

As I laid on the bed, my consciousness started to slip away. I felt the presence of my parents near me and Bruno on the other side of my largely comfortable bed.