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The Clock

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The Clock

Liana Parks

Spooky Story Contest Honorable Mention

“Don’t go to the bathroom at 3:00,” Haley whispers. “There’s a man in the mirror. But he’s not there when you turn around.”

We’re curled up under our blankets, in bed, talking. Mom and Dad think we’re asleep, we’re talking so quietly. We’ve been talking about school and boys, but we changed to the dreams we remember the most. Actually, dreams isn’t right. We remember our nightmares.

“But this isn’t a nightmare,” Haley tells me. “I’ve seen him. He’s real.”

“I’ve never seen him.” I say it a little too loud and Haley shushes me. My chest puffs out and I roll my eyes. I’m not scared. I’m nine. I’m too old to be scared. Haley’s only six. She doesn’t know anything.

“He’s real.”

“Whatever. I’m really going to sleep now.” I roll onto my stomach. Looking out at the room I see the glowing red numbers from the little alarm clock I got for my birthday. **8:59 PM.**

The next time I open my eyes it’s **2:58.** I really have to pee. The baby’s down the hall, across from Mom and Dad. Their doors are open. Everyone is sleeping and I don’t want to wake them up.

I tiptoe down the hall, knowing exactly where there are no creaks. I go into the bathroom and close the door. There are no windows because it’s in the middle of the house, and I don’t want people to wake up when I turn on the light, so I close the door before flipping the switch.

When I’m done, I wash my hands and turn off the lights before opening the door again. For some reason I look over my shoulder at the sink, just under the mirror, and freeze.

There in the mirror is the face of a man, at least a head above me. I see his eyes, nose, and mouth outlined in orange-yellow. He looks down at me.

I shake my head, closing my eyes, and he disappears. I know that light can makes you see things when you turn it off. That's all it was.

I hurry back down the hall and into bed. The clock changes. **3:01.**

I lay there, watching the clock. I can feel my heart beating really fast. I don't know if that was real or not. Was Haley right? No. She just spooked me with her story. *Stupid sisters.* My heartbeat slows. My eyes close and I fall back asleep.

My eyes fly open, landing immediately on the glow of the clock.

3:29. Why did I wake up?

Cre-ea-k.

Someone's in the hallway. It can't be Mom or Dad. They wouldn't move that slow. The baby can't get out of his crib and Haley's sleeping below me. I can hear her breathing. I'm frozen, my eyes stuck on the clock. **3:30.**

Cre-ea-k.

Are they moving away from my room? They are. They're right outside the baby's room. Then nothing. **3:31.**

Maybe I was hearing things. Haley scared me more than I thought. I'm going to kill her in the morn—

Cre-ea-k. Cre-ea-k.

They're moving faster, coming back down the hall. I blink. **3:32.**

I hold my breath. I hope they can't hear my heartbeat. The doorknob turns and the door starts opening, slowly. I feel like there's someone else in the room. I can't move. I can't hide.

3:33 AM.

Yellow eyes block my view of the clock.