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Everyone's Scared Of Something

The “Treasure Shop” was an old and musty antique store, and half of everything was broken. It was kinda freaky. Cobwebs were everywhere, and I wasn't quite sure if they were real or not. I didn't want to ask Audrey though, because she was terrified of spiders. Not deathly terrified or anything, just scared. But that's okay. Everyone's scared of something.

I took my time weaving through the shelves of old glasses and torn dresses, and carefully examined every globe, glass, and typewriter. Gently, I ran my hands along the surface of each item, rubbing away at the years of dust laying over them all. But when I got to the next aisle, my legs locked tight. I could barely move. I felt like a boulder was stuck in my throat, and sweat dribbled down my back.

I could hear Audrey bounce up next to me, but I couldn't even look at her. “Hey Mag! What's wrong?” That must have been when she noticed the row of dolls though, because she didn't question me any further. “Ohh. I see.”

We stood there for a second, and despite my complete horror, everything was fine. But then I felt my knees wobble, and the world turned sideways before it

all splashed into a never ending night. Still, I could see the outline of the doll's head, its old porcelain body chipped and cracked, its long curls barely intact. Even the lace on the dress was coming unwoven. That doll was the one that scared me the most. I hate porcelain dolls.

I didn't have an actual phobia of them, but my parents said I was on the verge of it. Dolls, especially porcelain dolls, terrified me to no end. So, naturally, when I awoke, and the first thing I saw was a doll, I freaked. But then Audrey clamped a hand over my face, efficiently obscuring my sight of the dolls.

"Let's get out of here, Mag." She led me towards the door, her hands still covering my eyes. I could feel plastic hitting my cheek, so I figured Audrey must have bought something.

"What did you get?" I heard the jingle of the door closing behind us, and then Audrey drew her hand away from my eyes.

"Oh, nothing much. I'll show you later."

I was restless that night, tossing and turning in my bed for what felt like hours. Finally, I just got out of bed and slipped on my sandals.

My room was dark, even with the window open, and I could barely find the door to get out. But when I stepped into the hall, I was surprised to find that I was standing in what looked like a dark alley way. Although it was hard to see, I knew

it was definitely not my hallway, which I knew meant it was probably a dream. I looked behind me, but my bedroom was gone, and even if it were right behind me, I wouldn't have seen it. I could barely see enough to put one foot in front of the other.

Taking one tiny little baby step at a time, I managed to inch my way forward. Soon enough I could see the outline of someone standing by a door. Since I was pretty sure it was a dream, I decided to see what happens.

Feeling a little braver, I made my way towards the person, walking at a normal pace. About half way there, I began to see a little better. The street was old and raggedy, and most of the lamps were dying out. Some were even broken.

The girl in front of me had short black hair, braided and laced with beads. It hung just above her shoulders. She had on a striped purple tank top, and some black leggings underneath. I thought I remembered Audrey wearing that outfit once.

“Audrey?” I called, but I was already sure it was her.

Recognizing my voice, she ran towards me, and I embraced her in a tight hug.

As we parted, she cocked her head and gave me quite the look. “How did you get find your way into my dream?”

“Your dream?” I laughed. *Was I supposed to be in her head or something?*

“I thought this was my dream!”

“Oh well, maybe it’s both of our dreams. Either way, the only place on this drab street isn’t even labeled!” She gestured towards the door behind her, which seemed as if it was rotting away with age, right there in the middle of...

somewhere?

“Let’s check it out!” I said, heading towards it.

“Wait!”

“What is it, Audrey?” *Why was she stopping now?*

“I can’t shake the feeling that there’s something awful in there.”

“C’mon. I mean, we’ll never know until we found out! What’s the worst that could happen?”

“Spiders...” She muttered. I heard what she said, but figured it best not to poke her about it.

The place was dark and dusty, and it was also quite bare. All the shelves and all the display cases were empty. It sort of made me sad.

As we walked, our feet creaked against the floor. It was almost like a pattern, one two, one two, one two, one two. I was just getting into the rhythm when I realized that Audrey had come to a complete halt.

“Audrey, what’s wrong?”

I looked at her. She was shaking in fear, and her skin was as pale as the moon that lit the shop, coming through a single window, which was casting weird shadows across the floor and the walls. Audrey raised her hand to point to one.

“Sp-p-p-pider!”

I didn't see the spider at first. I thought it was just another shadow flung across the wall. But then I realized that the huge patch of darkness was the opening into a hallway. And the darker shadow there had glowing red eyes and long, hairy legs. It was bigger than we were!!

“Oh. My. God. *Run!*” I screamed, and we both turned on our heels and ran screaming for the door. The door was still wide open. We could make it!

And that was when we hit the spider web,

It was sticky and gooey. I could feel my arms as they slid into it, trying to cover my face. While I was successful at protecting my face and the rest of my head, I could see that Audrey was not. The side of her face was stuck to the spider web, and her arms were stuck at an odd angle above her head. Her thighs were stuck as well, but her shins weren't, leaving her feet to dangle. My legs, on the other hand, were stuck in sideways cannonball, completely fixed to the web.

“Ohhh boy. We're going to die. We are definitely going to die.” I could hear the panic in Audrey's voice.

“Calm down Audrey. We're going to be-”

“To be what?”

Frankly, I wasn't really paying attention to Audrey anymore. The spider had crept out of the shadows towards us now, and I could see the strange red hourglass marking on its back.

I took in a deep breath. “It's a black widow.”

“The spider? Are- aren't those, like, deadly?”

I sighed. “Yeah. We're dead meat.”

The spider was slowly crawling towards us. Audrey started to wriggle around in her web. The more she wriggled, the tighter she was stuck.

“Audrey, stop it!” She heard me shout, and thankfully, she did stop.

Even through all our trauma, the spider was still crawling towards us at the same slow pace. But it was almost at our web.

“Oh god, oh god, oh god!” Audrey was about to literally shake herself right off the web in fear. As the spider began to crawl onto her web, I watched her shake just a little harder. It seemed to attract the spider.

“Audrey,” I whispered, “Stop moving.”

The strings were coming undone on her now, but she was still stuck, and the spider wanted her dead. We both lay as perfectly still as we could, though, maybe the spider would think we were dead.

Of course it didn't at first. It continued heading towards Audrey for a second before slowing to stop. It must have assumed we were now dead, because it backed away from us for a second.

And that second was all Audrey needed. I was surprised when she shook right of the web, falling to the floor. She quickly scrambled to her feet and pulled me from the web as well, temporarily saving us from the spider.

"Wow! You had a plan?" I was surprised. I thought she was too scared to think clearly.

"Of course! I always have a plan. Remember?" She smirked.

"Sure do." And just like that, the big, bad spider and its huge, sticky web vanished. For good.

"Let's get out of here now." Audrey said, turning toward where the door should've been. "Where'd it go?"

"Maybe we're lost," I decided. We probably were. "We should check some other places."

We decided to split up. We'd call out to one another when one of us found the door. She started along the wall, but I headed through the aisles to try and get to the other side of the room a little quicker. That was when I screamed.

They were everywhere. The dolls were all across the floor, strewn among the shelves. But one just sat there on the middle shelf, perfectly still.

Audrey ran up to me, panting for breath. One look and she nearly screamed too. Half of the doll's faces were smashed in, and their dresses were covered in-

“Oh my god,” Audrey was horrified. “Is that *blood!*?”

I surprised at how far away my voice sounded, even to my own ears: “Yeah. I think it is.”

“Let's just get you out of here.” She turned me away from the dolls, but before we could go anywhere, I felt something grab my sleeve.

“Please don't leave us. Please don't go. We like you.” I turned to see who it was and I shrieked. One of the dolls was grabbing my jacket!

Audrey swiveled her head around. “What in the-”

The doll on the middle shelf turned its head towards Audrey. “But we don't like you.”

“Nope.”

“No way.”

“Get her out of here!”

They all started to tug at Audrey's pants and her arms. Their sharp broken edges cut into her skin until she bled. And all I was doing was standing there, frozen in fear. What was I going to do?

A thought came to me. They were nice to me. They said they liked me, even if I didn't like them. Treat others how you want them to treat you...

“Hey. Guys, if you don’t like her, than suck it up. Please? For me? You guys won’t push me around anymore though, either. I’m not scared of you. So if you want Audrey to be nice to, then you’ve got to be nice to her.”

And then the dolls faded away, till all that was left was the one doll sitting on the shelf, face cracked and head crooked, its hair loose and its dress torn. And then it disappeared, just like the rest.

I awoke in a sweaty clump. It was light outside now, and the sun lit my room with glee. As I slipped out of bed, I noticed the bag Audrey got from that old antique store, just sitting there on my night stand. I reached in pulled out an old porcelain doll, its face cracked and its dress torn, just like the doll in my dream. And just like the doll at the Treasure shop. Strangely, I loved it.

Maybe just because, hand stitched into the dress were the words, *Don't let your fears control you.*