Ish (A short horror story)

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This is another installment to my "horror" portfolio. Rated R, just to be on the safe side.

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(Part 1)

Ish

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I sat at my desk, quietly. Frustration was setting in as I referred back to the same paragraph again in my American History book. As if this paper were not enough, an unfinished page of math problems lay beneath it. Perhaps itâ s clichÃ© of me, but I think Middle School sucks.

I suppose a good writing of not too distant events deserves a better introduction. Forgive me, this is in pen and I canâ t go back to correct my haste made mistake.

Perhaps I should introduce myself first. My name is Clark Morre Junip. I am now a mostly healed, middle aged man. Furthermore I am convinced I am sound of mind, and always have been. This writing is the proclamation of my sanity, and thus the full reason I am prepared for the river to my right.

Once upon a time I was a fourteen year old boy with a patriarchal father and a quiet mother. There were three younger boys then myself living in our large family and one older sister. Them the circus and she the self proclaimed monarch of our grand estate.

As I write this I feel myself looking through my fourteen year old eyes. I am in eighth grade, an â Aâ student, and a fair player on the all boys academy wrestling team. It is near Christmas and homework is piled higher then you could imagine; as I already began to explain. Private schooling is so rigorous. Knowing this you can now understand why I might be so frustrated, Christmas was close enough I could taste it.

So I sat at my desk, writing an essay about the early American colonies. Perhaps Iâ ll mention, to give scope to the estate and my family, that we could trace lineage back to those said colonies.

A wonderful subject my father could never press enough.

My door was closed behind me at this late hour and the only light was the low lamp on my desk. The young ones were asleep and God knows what her highness was up to. Probably not even home, but off somewhere drinking brandy. Perhaps father saw it as culture.

Iâ m sorry Iâ m getting side tracked again. That happens when your river gets too loud. To the confession; more I say, to the truth. Iâ ll try to stay focused.

The clock was ringing the quarter hour before midnight. Much too late to be doing homework, but necessity knows no bounds. It was my own doing and mine own to fix. I suppose sports should never trump over academics. For all of that, Iâ m grateful I was awake. I cannot imagine what could have been had I been sleeping at this time on this particular night.

I was wearing my pajamas, comfortably warm. Now, I tell you this because I would not have noticed the draft in my room had I not been wearing an unbuttoned shirt. I felt the light draft on the back of my neck and down my chest. It was one of those peculiar moments when you are looking for an electric light switch and you cannot find it. Similar to that feeling in the pit of your stomach that makes you run up the stairs when in the dark for fear of a chase. I always used to run up the stairs. I donâ t believe I was an easily frightened boy, but some things, I believed, lingered in the dark.

I slowly looked over my shoulder with my pencil in my mouth to see my door standing wide open. This did not scare or even alert me much. I knew it was possible that my door did not shut tight and it just happened to push open because of an airway or something of the sort. These things happen often in large estates.

I believed that those things just happened.

Floor boards however are not affected by airways. As I eluded, our house is old for as grand as it is . The floorboards are weak in places and a little warped in others. Some creak when you step on them. I stared at my open door curiously at the sound of a creek. A servant in the hall, or perhaps it came from the floor above my room where anyone could have stepped at this late hour.

My floorboards creaked again; *my* floorboard. The sound made me jump, loud as it was, but the creaking stopped as I stood up to look. Itâ s a funny thing if you think about it. Fourteen years I have been living in this building and for all fourteen of them this room was my castle. When you live around such boards that creak, you learn which board makes which sound. I myself was like a musician with perfect pitch. I had perfect floor board pitch, and one of the strings in my ensemble had just played far out of turn.

I could hear that long groaning creak, and know where in the entrance to my castle to look. Nothing happened. I checked the clock again to see it was now half till midnight. It was very possible I had simply heard the noise in my tiredness, but I was so sure I had heard that board creak. To this day I declare, I *heard* that board creak! I admit at that time sixteen years ago I became frightened. Images from some frightening literature I had read weeks ago came to mind. I quite scared myself into sitting down and starting again on my homework. For the first time since I sat down I was glad to have a task to set my mind to. I tried to let the work consume me. I read the questions, twiddling my pencil, then replacing it back between my teeth. I had learned this clever pencil trick that year. The reason does not matter but Iâ ll tell you it had to do with a girl whose name I cannot remember, nor does it any longer matter.

I sat at my desk twiddling very fast when I felt it, a breath on the back of my neck. Again in fright I stood and turned to see nothing. I was vexed over the situation when again my floor creaked. I looked down at the board that had creaked this time. It gave a short dull snap of a creak. Always sounding like a small dry twig. A percussionist in my ensemble, also very off beat.

I knew this board was next to my bed. I fought with two different ideas. One was logical, an old house makes many noises on its own accord. The second was of the old literature that had much to do with ghosts and spirits.

I stood very still, when then it then made a noise. Itâ s hard to describe the sound it made. At best I can spell it out, â Ishâ . The voice that had made the noise was low and from the deepest parts of oneâ s throat; like a dog when growling at a stranger. The sound it made was even animal in nature. It made this noise a few more times in succession. There were other oddities mixed in between, but again and again, â ish, ish, ishâ . I then witnessed two deep dips form on my bed sheets. Like two heavy hands leaning on a counter. The creak that followed was of weight being lifted from the board.

I watched all this now terrified. I remain terrified to this day. I could see the length of it on my bed and a sketchy estimate of its width. It was not very tall or wide. It was maybe, if such shaky estimations could be believed, just over four feet tall. I remember taking in long, silent breaths through my nose. Fourteen year old boys do not consider madness as other, older, far more sensible men later did. Fourteen year old boys believe what they see.

I thought many times of yelling for some one but I feared no one would believe me if it were to get up and disappear. To think that was my first concern! How would I ever find it to prove myself? Why would I want

to? I thought next about attacking it. This thought was absurd of course. Would you attack an invisible entity lying silent on your bed? With what, in what nature does one do such a thing?

When I had ruled out flight and fight, my next strained thought was science. I began to think of experimentation. Was it possible this thing was actually human? Could it be coherent, or speak to me of wonders? There were tales of such things, though never by â sensibleâ men. There was something about this thing that was so alien in nature. I kept calling it a â thingâ I do not know why. I could not say he or her, or him or she. I could not at that time nor can I at this time even identify it as an animal or a human. My young strained mind began to hurt.

Ish, would do.

Ish lay motionless for quite some time. I am unsure how long, I know I stood and stared for quite a while. Now sure I was going to neither run, nor attack, I wondered; do I touch it and make sure I was not insane? Try to speak to it? My bed was longer then Ish and I had a blanket at the foot of the bed that was not inclined, indicating Ish's feet did not lay on it. With numb hands, it seemed, I fumbled the blanket off of the foot of the bed. I let it unfold down to my feet and held it up by both corners. I took a breath, held it, and with a wip of my wrist, let the light blanket cover and settle over the form on my bed.

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