

MONSTERS

written by

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September 3, 2021

INT. FILLMORE ELEMENTARY - CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

The clock reads: 2:58. The hands slowly TICK away the seconds until the class is free.

A few of the STUDENTS risk anxious glances at the clock-- jeez, these are the longest two minutes of their lives.

Their teacher, MRS. MADDOX (50s, stern), looks over the assignments. She doesn't look pleased with the results.

The only student who doesn't look thrilled to soon be free is CALVIN (9, glasses). He watches the clock with a look of anxiety, nervously TAPPING his pencil on his desk.

He leans forward to his best friend, VICTOR (also 9). Taps him on the shoulder.

CALVIN
Hey.

VICTOR
What?

CALVIN
Can I come over to your house
after school?

VICTOR
I wish. I've gotta get dressed up
and go to my aunt's stupid
rehearsal dinner.

Calvin deflates. Visually crushed. He sinks back into his seat. His last option gone.

CALVIN
Great...

VICTOR
You can come over next weekend. My
sister's doing some cheerleading
thing. We can sneak into her room
and read her diary again.

CALVIN
Sounds good. I'll be there.

Calvin's foot begins nervously jiggling under his desk. He checks the clock again-- less than thirty seconds. His dread wells up.

Calvin looks around at the other students, taking in the looks of excitement on their faces. Envious.

He'd love nothing more than to feel their elation.

Finally, the BELL RINGS.

MRS. MADDOX

All right, you're free to go. I'll
see you on Monday.

The students quickly grab their belongings and file from the room, pushing and shoving each other out of the way to get through the door.

Calvin lags behind. He slowly grabs his stuff, then heads after the others.

INT. FILLMORE ELEMENTARY - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Loud chatter. Voices on top of voices.

The students stand in a single-file line near the entrance. Waiting on the bus.

Calvin and Victor stand at the back of the line.

Calvin cranes his neck to see if the bus has pulled up yet.

VICTOR

So what are you getting into
tonight? Video games? Pizza?

Calvin plays it cool.

CALVIN

I don't know. Too many choices.

VICTOR

Anything's better than having to
sit through my aunt's rehearsal. I
wasn't there for her first four
weddings, why do I have to be
there for this one?

Calvin shrugs.

CALVIN

I guess they like having you
around.

VICTOR

Lucky me.

Calvin fakes a smile.

CALVIN
Yeah... lucky you.

The line starts moving.

Calvin hangs his head and follows the others towards the bus.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON

More chaotic noise. More hyper activity.

Calvin sits in the last seat with Victor. He stares out the window, more and more upset with each mile they continue forward.

EXT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A two-story home sits on a corner lot. It's cozy and quaint. Rose bushes line the walkway along with small solar lights. The grass has recently been cut.

The bus comes to a stop. The door slides open.

Calvin slowly makes his way off the bus and meanders down the steps.

He takes a deep breath, a hand nervously fidgeting with the shoulder strap of his backpack.

The bus doors close behind him. It drives off.

Calvin watches the bus disappear around the corner, then turns back to the house--

The previously Norman Rockwell-style home now looks straight out of a horror movie. It's dark and gloomy, storm clouds loom behind the home, casting it in dark shadows.

Calvin ambles towards the front door.

Shaky hands twist the doorknob and push quietly. He takes a deep breath, then steps inside--

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Floorboards are missing or rotten. Cobwebs hang from every surface. The whole building seems to sway and rumble, accompanied by NOISES. SCREAMS, MOANS, SUFFERING.

Fear slips into Calvin as he closes the door, praying it doesn't make a sound. His eyes dart to a room on the left-- a black aura surrounds this room.

The sounds get louder as he watches this door.

Calvin starts for the stairs, making sure not to step on any of the rotten boards. Trying to hurry as quickly as he can while making as little noise as possible.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Calvin shuts the door, then leans against it, letting out a long, slow breath of relief.

He looks around his room-- the only place that isn't decrepit.

Superhero posters cover the walls. The bed has a race car frame. Various action figures are piled on the bed.

No time to waste.

Calvin gets to work. He lines his action figures up on the floor, pointing them towards the door. Their weapons held high, at the ready.

Calvin turns to his bed. Grabs the only toy left on it-- MARTY, an old G.I. Joe with torn clothing and missing an eye.

CALVIN
You ready, Marty?

Calvin grabs a TOY GUN from the floor beside his bed-- grips the gun and Marty tightly-- then SLIDES across it, Dukes of Hazard style.

Calvin lands on the floor behind his bed. Pokes his head up. His eyes scan the room.

He folds Marty into a sitting position and plops him down beside him. Points his gun at the door. Like a soldier in the trenches waiting for an unseen enemy.

Calvin waits. His finger hovers over the trigger. Eager to fire if necessary.

Calvin glances over at Marty--

CALVIN
Think they heard me?

FROM OUTSIDE HIS ROOM--

A THUD.

Calvin freezes. Swallowing hard.

He waits...

...and waits...

...and waits...

But nothing happens.

Calvin relaxes, sliding down to the floor, his back braced against his bed.

CALVIN
I think we're good.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - LATER

The daylight is starting to disappear outside his window. His room is growing darker by the second.

Calvin sits in the same spot, gun in his lap, Marty ever vigilant by his side.

Calvin's stomach GROWLS.

Calvin reaches down, rubs a hand across his stomach. He can't take it anymore.

Calvin looks down at Marty.

CALVIN
I'm starving. Think we can make it
to the kitchen?

Calvin stares at the toy, as if waiting for an answer.

CALVIN
I gotta try...

He picks up Marty and his toy gun, then heads towards the door.

Calvin eases the door open-- as quietly and gently as possible.

CALVIN
(low)
I can do this... I can do this...
I just gotta be brave.

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - EVENING

Calvin inches his way forward, making as little sound as possible.

He reaches the top of the landing, looking down the broken, creaky stairs the descend downstairs.

Calvin tucks Marty into his belt. Heads down the stairs. He has the path memorized by this point, knowing exactly where to stands to avoid noise-- like hopscotch, with the added pressure of being deadly silent.

MARTY (O.S.)
You can do it!

Calvin looks down. Amazed to see his favorite toy talking. He smiles.

MARTY
You're strong. You've got this.

Calvin speaks in barely more than a whisper--

CALVIN
(low)
What if I can't? What if I get caught.

MARTY
You can do it. I'm with you.

CALVIN
(low)
Are you sure?

MARTY
Trust me.

CALVIN
All right.

He continues his path down the stairs.

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - EVENING

The ROARING is louder down here. Something primal, almost evil. Somewhere between a dinosaur and a lion.

Sounds that cause the very floor to tremble.

Calvin tiptoes across towards the kitchen, never taking his eyes of the BLACK AURA DOOR.

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Calvin creeps into the state-of-the-art kitchen-- or what's left of it-- and opens the door to the grime-covered fridge.

Everything in here is falling apart, like the rest of the house. It's been neglected for who knows how long.

Anyone with a conscious would condemn this place in a heartbeat.

Calvin crosses to the fridge. Lays his gun down on the counter. Opens it--

REVEAL:

A mostly empty fridge, illuminated by a flickering, faint bulb.

Beer cans cover the shelves. A few plastic containers filled with nasty-looking leftovers.

And on the bottom shelf, practically hidden by everything else, are a few Lunchables.

Calvin closes the fridge. Places his dinner on the counter. He swats away MAGGOTS and WORMS.

His eyes move up to the cabinet-- it might as well be climbing Mount Everest.

The easy part is over, now he has to get a glass from the cabinet.

Calvin looks up, biting his lip. This is where everything could fall apart.

With trembling arms, he HOISTS himself, pulling his knees onto the counter. He stops, making sure he has sufficient footing so he doesn't fall.

Calvin crawls forward. The cabinet is within reach. Everything is going perfectly.

Until--

A small CREAK stops him in his tracks.

Calvin holds his breath, bracing for what comes next. His eyes turn to the doorway-- *did they hear?*

The monster's noises continue SCREECHING AWAY.

He's safe.

Calvin lets out a breath, wiping sweat from his forehead. Trying to keep his hands steady, Calvin opens the cabinet and pulls out a glass. Wipes the dust off with his shirt sleeve.

He slides down the counter, maneuvering to the floor with the grace of an athlete.

So far, so good. He grins to himself, he might just make it safely back to his room.

MARTY

I told you we could do it.

Calvin gives Marty a thumbs up. Goes to the sink. Fills the glass with water.

He turns off the water, then starts to leave.

As he turns, he nearly jumps out of his skin--

A MONSTER appears from thin air in front of him.

White, like a ghost. Tall thin, spider-like legs protrude from its stomach, muscles and ligaments exposed from lack of skin.

One dangling eye is trained on Calvin.

Calvin recoils, as if expecting to be attacked.

CALVIN

I-I'm s-sorry...

The monster growls, rearing up to leap forward.

Calvin squeezes his eyes tightly waiting for the impact...

...but it doesn't come.

MARTY

It's okay, kid.

Calvin opens his eyes.

The room is empty, save for him and Marty.

Calvin, relieved, hurries out of the room.

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Calvin throws himself onto his bed, looking up at the ceiling. Heart still beating a million miles a minute. He tries to calm himself, unsure whether to laugh or cry.

Calvin sits up and starts tearing into his dinner.

He looks at Marty, unable to resist smiling.

CALVIN

We did it.

MARTY

I told you. Anytime I'm around,
things will be fine. That's what
I'm here for.

CALVIN

Thanks, Marty. I don't know what
I'd do without you.

MARTY

You'd be a lot scrawnier than you
are now.

Calvin cranes his head, putting his ear towards the door. The
monsters are still going at it. Their ROARS getting louder.

CALVIN

What time do you think they'll
stop tonight?

MARTY

Who knows. Maybe they'll set a new
record. You'd think at some point
they'd get tired or something...

CALVIN

Yeah...

INT. CALVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Empty food container and glass sit on the nightstand. The lamp
is now on, casting a warm glow on the room.

Calvin lies on his stomach, doing his homework. He adjusts his
glasses, trying to focus.

He gives up. Reaches under his bed, pulls out a stack of comic
books. Places them in front of him.

Calvin pulls a comic book off the top and begins thumbing
through it. His smile widens with every page. His imagination
brimming with content.

CALVIN

I wanna be like Superman.
(MORE)

CALVIN (CONT'D)

I wanna save people from bad guys
and monsters.

Marty sits at the foot of the bed, facing the door.

MARTY

One day you will.

This perks Calvin up slightly.

CALVIN

You think so?

MARTY

I know so. You just have to
believe in yourself. Do that, and
you'll be able to do anything.

CALVIN

I hope you're right.

MARTY

Hey, I'm right about everything
all the time, remember?

CALVIN

True.

Calvin chuckles. Stops abruptly.

He notices something--

The monster noises have stopped.

Icy fear washes over Calvin's body. He bolts from the bed and
looks out the window. Spots the cars still in the driveway.

Calvin turns to Marty. Fear etched onto his face.

CALVIN

The monsters are loose in the
house!

Calvin grabs his toy gun from the bed. Points it at the door.

CALVIN

What are we going to do?

MARTY

It's fine, it's fine. Don't panic.

Then Calvin hears--

FOOTSTEPS outside his door. They're coming closer.

Calvin makes a beeline for the closet, the safest place he can think of.

IN THE CLOSET

Calvin pulls the door almost shut, leaving a small gap to peer through. He grips his gun tightly.

He looks around, a heartbreaking realization that no superhero is coming to save him sinking in.

The door to Calvin's bedroom SLIDES OPEN.

THOMAS (V.O.)

Calvin? Where are you? We need to talk.

Calvin emerges from the closet. He approaches his father-- not a demon, not a devil, not a monster. Just a man. But, maybe, a monster to some.

THOMAS, 40, well dressed. He'd be a handsome man if not for the scowl on his face.

CALVIN

Sorry. I was playing.

Thomas looks around the room, at the toys scattered all over the place.

THOMAS

Didn't I tell you to clean up this mess?

Calvin hangs his head. He can't find the words. Nods.

CALVIN

Sorry.

THOMAS

I don't want you to be sorry, I want you to listen to me.

An awkward, stale silence.

Calvin still can't bring himself to look up.

THOMAS

Your teacher called. Apparently you've been distracted lately. Says your grades are slipping.

CALVIN
I'm trying my best, Dad.

THOMAS
Are you?

Calvin nods.

THOMAS
So what are you going to do?

CALVIN
Focus.

THOMAS
And?

CALVIN
Get better grades.

THOMAS
We're not gonna have this
conversation again. Understand?

Calvin nods again.

THOMAS
I said understand?

Calvin looks up. Trying to hold back tears.

CALVIN
Yes, sir.

THOMAS
No more warnings.

Calvin's mother, DIANA, late 30s, at the end of her rope,
enters the room. She looks like she's been crying.

DIANA
What's going on?

THOMAS
Nothing. I took care of it. I'm
disciplining my son-- this doesn't
concern you.

Diana almost looks like she wants to say something, but has
learned to chose her battles.

Thomas storms out of the room. Muttering under his breath.

Diana rounds on Calvin.

DIANA

Great. Now you've got him started again.

Diana turns and heads after her husband.

Calvin goes to his door. Peers into the hallway and rooms beyond.

Everything is NORMAL. No darkness, no condemned building. Just a normal, upper middle class suburban home.

The kind of place anyone would love to have.

The monster sounds are gone, replaced instead by the distant sounds of his PARENTS ARGUING.

DIANA (O.S.)

Really?! You're gonna have another drink?!

THOMAS (O.S.)

That's the only way I can handle listening to your mouth!

Calvin closes his door. His head held low like an abused animal. He collects himself. Looks up at Marty, waiting for a response. But none comes.

He picks up Marty and places him on the nightstand, facing the door. Then crawls into bed, pulling the covers up to his chin.

For a moment, he lies there. Staring at the ceiling. He reaches up for the lamp--

CALVIN

Hey, Marty? Keep an eye out for monsters.

Calvin turns off the lamp.

FADE TO BLACK.