

Brian Trish was a happy man. A glorious house in a suburb of Markham, Ontario, a well paying job in the upcoming software business, one gorgeous wife and two healthy children were all products of Brian's ever-lasting lust for life. His only motto was "two cars in the garage" and the rest would be sorted. He had doubted himself growing up in the marvelous city of Toronto, but by the time he had finished college, he had met his sweetheart and was at the right age to experiment with the hot new industry of computing. The success was everywhere: the colours on the walls of the house, the double bed, the fabulous meals cooked every night, the increasing amounts of paychecks he would receive. Indeed, he was living in the poorest area of paradise.

Sandy, loving wife and mother of two was dazed after seemingly never-ending promotions through life. Her life had started in the United States, but had decided to move to Canada to avoid her parents and past troubles. After two years in Markham, the family house was extremely lush. She was proud of this, especially since Brian was always busy at work and the kids couldn't talk; it was a silent success. Since the kids started school, Sandy had felt alone. Even at night, next to her loving husband. I suppose a part of her wanted to go back to the US, but another part wanted to stay in Markham. Where it was safe.

Brian and Sandy awoke one morning like they would if it was any other morning. Brian started his daily crawl to the bathroom, and hopefully the shower, while Sandy started down the stairs to prepare breakfast. As usual, Jon (aged 10) and Ira (aged 8) were going to be asleep for another half hour, all ready to be woken up by their father in his shirt, tie and his boorish black trousers.

This morning, however, Brian went downstairs after getting dressed to see his wife. "Good morning." he said, "What's for breakfast?" asked the hungry working man. "Sausages and eggs." she replied, rather dully.

"What's up tweety pie?" Brian asked, "Sometimes it's like I don't know you anymore." That was true.

"I guess I'm just ill or something...don't worry about it."

"I have to worry about you." Brian told her. They exchanged a kiss, as they often did when a moment of true love transpired.

"I'll get the kids." Brian sighed and started back up the stairs. Sandy looked back; she wasn't sure if she knew him anymore either. It was something in the air, but she could never put her finger on it. It would stay that way until he finally put his finger on her secret.

After two hours had passed, breakfast was consumed (rather heavily by the males of the family) and the kids started getting ready for their school bus. Brian started away early today since they'd been some trouble around the highway in town. Sandy just sighed; she didn't see enough of her beloved in the most usual cases. While thinking this, she didn't even batter an eyelid at a slightly odd

question from Jon, "Mommy, what kinds of monsters are there? You know, I know the popular ones but what about the rest?" Sandy looked slightly startled, "What makes you ask that dear?" as she rearranged his clothes. "Well, I had a dream about a man that could fly and eat people." Jon claimed confidently, "Has anyone ever done that?" Of course, Sandy flashed her default mother response, "There's no such thing as monsters." But Jon's younger sister piped in, "What about goblins and spiders?" Well, everyone knows about spiders, but goblins...slightly disturbed Sandy. "Goblins don't exist Ira." she exclaimed. "Then, what were those things on the sidewalk last night that me and Jon..." she cut off halfway through because of the look on her mother's face. "The bus is here." Sandy sighed in relief. "Go on kids. Have a nice day." "We always do Mom." they yelled back as they both waved. Now Sandy had nothing planned for the rest of the day. She rubbed her shoulders as she looked around for a moment at the Markham family house and suddenly felt a horrible sense of entrapment. She brought out the wine bottles in the kitchen and poured her first glass of the day and sighed.

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The area of Box Grove seemed so big once you were driving around the labyrinth. Brian had complete faith in his vehicle, no more than five years old and a fine example of foreign engineering. Brian still had an hour to get downtown. Plenty of time for a quickie or two, he thought as he started his car towards one of Markham's many residential parks. The parks had clean air and gave one time to think. As Brian drove around the curvy roads of Box Grove, he felt his knuckles tense up as they usually did at this time. He needed his cigarette now. It was only a small road just off 14th Avenue, but it would fulfill his privacy needs. He cracked the auto's slightly blackened windows for air while he lit up a few bad boys. He slipped off the otherwise life saving seatbelt to make sure he wasn't murdered by it, the thought of which made him giggle slightly. The first exhale, Brian knew, was always the best. Within two minutes, he was on his third cigarette. While he prepared a fourth, he suddenly heard a sound. It made him jump a little bit because he was surprised to see two young boys standing next to his door, and he never saw them approach.

It was one of the boys tapping on the window causing the sound. Brian only wound the window a little bit more before talking to the youngsters. More money grabbing kids, Brian thought with a degree of anger from being interrupted during his quiet time. Suddenly, Brian felt terror. Two boys had just appeared by his car, and he had noticed the "tapper" was grinning broadly. He couldn't see them, but he still edged out "Yes?" at which, the "tapper" grinned even broader than before, showing off a set of pearl white teeth which extended Brian's unfounded terror. "Sir. We need your help." he calmly said, reminding Brian of a young man he knew, which was odd since these lads looked around Jon's age. "Me and my friend need a lift to school. It's quite late you see." Why did this

child speak much differently to an adult than any ordinary child? He showed no fear at all, unlike Brian, who was blaming it on the cigarettes. The only words Brian could push out were "Hmmm...well." He suddenly noticed something as soon as he finished speaking; the other child looked confused and at an angle, shocked, as if he expected Brian to simply open his car door. "We're just two little boys, who need a ride." the first one started again. Two little boys? Brian was unnerved further at this comment, "Wh...what school?" he attempted to ask. "The one down the road." the grinning boy answered as he pointed towards 14th Avenue. This perplexed Brian; he could think of no schools in the area along 14th Avenue. As he thought this comment over, he noticed the grinning boy's accomplice become nervous again. It hadn't crossed Brian's mind that something was out of order, but maybe it was. After all, Brian was usually a strong, confident individual who was now petrified by a bunch of kids. Once again, the first boy began "Come on, sir. If you let us in, we'll be out before you know it."

Brian locked eyes with the first boy. Somehow, his hand was slowly reaching towards the door lock. He was about to unlock the door until he made himself yank his arm away, hoping it didn't look too obvious to the youngsters. Brian forced himself not to look in the children's eyes. Then he snapped. That was it. The children had no pupil or iris within their eyes; it was blackness. He noticed the silent boy wear a face of horror; was he reading his mind? The first boy however, looked angry. "Sir. Let us in." he said in his calm way. Brian was freaked out enough; he slammed down on the accelerator, screaming down the road. He watched the boys in his mirror, unaware he was heading straight towards a wall. "Shit." he thought, remembering he had taken away his lifeline; the murderous seatbelt. The car hit the wall, forcing Brian Trish through the windscreen and head first into the wall, dead.

The boy was grinning again.

The days were never-ending for Sandy. It was only 10:30 and she was on her third glass of wine. She quickly slurped it, forgetting it was supposed to distract her from the isolationist Trish family house. No amount of electronic distraction would occupy Sandy, who before getting married was a popular girl of many branches. It's a shame she couldn't admit to Brian she just wanted to be with him to rebel, not to mother two kids. While the house itself was an above average masterpiece, Sandy never felt comfortable alone; it was as if something was watching her, something that could disappear whenever she turned. As always she'd be watched by the figure everywhere: while she drank, while she cooked her lunchtime pasta and while she did the laundry.

The Trishes were a liberal family. They had money to pay the tax hike that came with liberalism and respected most if not all minorities. In a neighbourhood like Box Grove, it wasn't uncommon to get a few knocks at the door per week. Someone would collect for someone, while someone sold cookies for someone

else until the residents had no money left. Sandy was usually fairly generous, offering something in the region of \$10 or \$15. Brian was the same, a sort of attempt to give the kids a vague sense of right and wrong, despite the liberalistic ideas being practiced.

This is why Sandy Trish wasn't surprised when there was a knock at the door. She was in the middle of reading a lifestyle magazine (which didn't really interest her in the slightest) and got out some money which she knew she'd need, no matter who it was. She propped her gigantic purse up against the table next to the door, unlocked the door and opened it as she normally would in this situation. She was fairly surprised to see two young boys standing on her shaded porch. She was about to ask what they wanted till one of them talked first, "Excuse me miss." Sandy was not surprised at the politeness of this attention grabber; after all she'd heard it several times before, "We're new to the area and we seem to have got lost on the way to school." The boy grinned in a strangely eerie way, while the other boy faced the floor, only glancing upwards several times. "Oh dear." replied Sandy. She was not quite as surprised as one might think; this had happened once before (the Trish house always looked the most inviting). "May my friend and I use the phone?" the same boy asked. The second boy raised his head a little and looked at the woman in the eye. Suddenly a thought came to Sandy.

Spiders and goblins

The kids seemed nice, she'd let them in and they'd be on *those things on the corner last night*

way like nothing ever happened, same old routine. "Come in." she said calmly, trying to hide a shudder whether it be from the wind or whatever else.

The children stepped in through the door, politely thanking Mrs. Trish, although the quieter boy's thanks was more of a murmur. Sandy let them be to their own devices as they picked up the phone and she set off towards the kitchen, perhaps to fetch a drink as she often would. Suddenly, something caught her eye: the mirror on the wall. The children were not using the phone. The talker was grinning directly at the mirror while other wore a blank face. They had black eyes, but before she could say, she was dead. Killed by the other worldly force.

The boy was grinning again.

Jon and Ira had both done reasonably well in school. The secret was being taught from a young age, even if it was mostly by the mother. Jon had a fairly large collection of friends, none of which could stay over after school due to a big assignment set by Miss Hornsy. Ira was less popular, but could still hold her social status over some of the older children. They both didn't realize how important that was. The school bus stopped and Jon and Ira disembarked for their house, waving goodbye to the friends they'd briefly miss.

Something was already odd to the children. The door was open and Mommy never left the door open, even when she was outside tending to the plants. Was it Daddy? No, he barely ever got home this early. They entered the house and looked around. "Mommy! Are you here?" yelled Ira.

"Look..." whispered Jon, as he pointed at their Mommy in the kitchen, standing in an upright position with large chunks of skin missing from her face. Jon ran over to her with Ira in near pursuit. Catching up with Jon however, she felt a drip of water on her face. It's that silly pipe again, she thought, looking upwards hoping to see a crack.

There was no crack, just a grinning, black eyed face sitting on the ceiling. Ira screamed, but not loud enough to get attention while she was "hugged" by the being and left unconscious by another of the same variety while he ate her. Jon looked at both of them, he looked deep into the white grin. "My mommy...my sister..." he wept. He grabbed the largest steak knife from the kitchen drawer and threw it in the direction of the freaks, hitting the blank faced one in his now red eye. He threw another knife, hitting the grinner right between his night eyes. They both fell to the hard, wood floor.

Jon, feeling heroic, walked up to the losers of the fight. Their faces rose from the floor to see Jon's heroism turn to fear.

The boy was grinning again.