

Something to Fear

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. GUNDERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

A modest two-story suburban home on a sleepy suburban street.

INT. GUNDERSON HOUSE - CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

SAM GUNDERSON and his wife, LILA, both early 30s, tuck their children, FRANKIE, 9 and MELANIE, 8, in bed.

LILA
Goodnight, Frankie.

FRANKIE
Goodnight, Mom.

SAM
Goodnight, Melanie.

MELANIE
Goodnight, Daddy.

LILA
Don't forget to say your prayers.

FRANKIE & MELANIE
We won't.

SAM
Sleep tight. Don't let the bed bugs bite.

FRANKIE
Dad, that's gross. You don't have to say that every night.

Sam, surprised, looks at Lila. She smiles sweetly.

LILA
He is your son, Sam.

Lila turns on a tiny nightlight. She clicks off the main lamp, immersing the room in near darkness.

FRANKIE
Don't forget the closet door, Mommy.

Lila crosses to the closet door and shuts it securely.

LILA

You know, Frankie, Melanie, your father and I have been meaning to talk to you about this whole closet thing.

FRANKIE

We close the closet to keep the Boogeyman away.

Sam and Lila turn to each other and smile, knowingly.

LILA

Oh, Frankie, there's just no such thing.

MELANIE

Yes, there is. He jumps out at night and scares us. That's why I have Timmy the Teddy Bear. He protects me.

Melanie holds up her teddy bear. One eye is covered with an eyepatch and a small bandage covers a large gash in his stomach. Stuffing spills over.

Sam and Lila simply smile at each other, like true loving parents.

SAM

That's just not true. There is no such thing as a Boogeyman. He's just a --

FRANKIE

(cutting in)

Fig Newton of my imagination. That's what teacher says. But he's real.

LILA

Nope. The Boogeyman is made up, like a fairy tale.

Behind Sam and Lila, the closet door slowly opens. Heavy breathing is heard, but no one seems to notice. Something is watching and listening.

LILA (CONT'D)

In fact, there used to be a time when I was a little girl when I believed. But you know what?

MELANIE

What?

LILA

I realized he was just some dumb old story that kids tell just to scare each other.

MELANIE

So he's not real?

SAM

If he's not a Gunderson and he isn't contributing to the mortgage, he's not real.

LILA

If he were real, you wouldn't even have to worry. Your father and I could both take him on.

FRANKIE

Oh, yeah?

SAM

Yeah. First, I'd kick him in the --

LILA

Sam...

SAM

-- shins and then headbutt him.

FRANKIE

Wow! Cool!

SAM

Then, I'd put him in a headlock while your mother would spank him with a rolling pin.

Frankie and Melanie laugh hysterically.

A low disapproving GROAN emanates from the closet behind Sam and Lila. Again, no one seems to hear.

LILA

Then, after he'd beg for mercy, your father would throw him out of the house and watch him run off like a big chicken.

Sam does a spirited chicken impersonation, CLUCKING up a storm.

Frankie and Melanie CLAP and GIGGLE accordingly, their fears laid to rest.

The GROANS from the closet cease. The door shuts.

LILA (CONT'D)

(to kids)

Feel better?

FRANKIE & MELANIE

(in unison)

Yes!

SAM

No more Boogeyman?

FRANKIE & MELANIE

Nope!

LILA

And that's because...

FRANKIE & MELANIE

He doesn't exist. Hooray!

SAM

(to Lila)

Well, I think our work here is done. Goodnight, kids.

FRANKIE & MELANIE

Goodnight, Mommy and Daddy.

Sam and Lila prepare to exit.

LILA

(to kids; off door)

Do you want this door closed?

FRANKIE (O.S.)

What, are you kidding?

Lila double-takes, but nonetheless leaves the door ajar.
Both she and Sam retire in the master bedroom down the hall.
They shut the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam and Lila get settled in bed.

SAM

Do you remember when you were that
age?

LILA

Like it was yesterday. In fact, I
think my Mom and Dad gave me the
same speech about the Boogeyman.

SAM

Everyone's parents told them that.
And here we are keeping up tradition.
Well, goodnight, Honey.

LILA

'Night.

They each turn out their lamps on their respective
nightstands. The near dark room is bathed in blue moonlight.

INT. GUNDERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

All is quiet in the dead of night. The interior is dark and
shadowy.

INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Frankie and Melanie sleep soundly. Melanie holds Timmy the
Teddy Bear close to her. His one good eye stares in the
direction of the closet door... which opens.

Heavy breathing is heard from within. Something emerges. A
DARK SHAPE or form, indistinct. It heads for the open bedroom
door and steps out into the...

HALLWAY

It heads for the master bedroom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door slowly creaks open. The dark FIGURE enters. It creeps towards the closet door. It opens it and enters, closing the door securely behind it.

Lila's eyes open to the sound of slight rustling. She sits up in bed and looks around.

The closet door opens... RED EYES peer out and stare at her. She gasps, breathless.

LILA
(whispered)
Sam. Sam?

SAM
(half asleep)
Not tonight, I have a headache.

LILA
(whispered)
Sam, wake up.

Sam stirs awake.

SAM
What?

LILA
(whispered)
There's somebody watching us.

SAM
Why are you whispering?

LILA
(whispered)
Shhh... In the closet. Look.

Sam rolls over and looks at the closet door. The RED EYES are still there.

SAM
What the hell?

Sam rises from bed and slowly tiptoes towards the closet.

LILA (O.S.)
Be careful.

SAM

Shhh...

Lila clutches the bedsheets desperately. She slowly brings them up to her neck in anticipation.

Sam carefully reaches out and grabs the doorknob, yanking the closet door open.

SAM (CONT'D)

A-ha! What the...?

(to Lila)

Turn on the light.

Lila clicks on her lamp.

IN THE CLOSET

The eyes are gone. Nothing but clothes hang inside, particularly one of Lila's sparkling red dresses.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh, Lila. It's just your red, sequined gown from the Patterson's cocktail party last week. The moonlight must've reflected off the little sparklies.

Lila sighs, relieved.

LILA

Oh, thank goodness. I thought for sure that --

SAM

What? The Boogeyman was coming to get you?

LILA

Don't start, Sam.

SAM

Lila, honey, baby, we need to set an example for our children. How is it going to look if we jump at every little thing after we tell our kids there's nothing to fear?

LILA

We won't tell them. They don't have to know.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

We do know. Keep it down in there.
Some of us are trying to sleep.

MELANIE (O.S.)

Yeah. We got school tomorrow.

SAM

They grow up so fast. But they're
right. We need to get some sleep.
Tell you what, I'll even close the
closet door. Huh? How's that?
Feel better?

LILA

Don't patronize me, old man.

She smiles, the fear gone from her face. Sam gets back into
bed. Lila shuts off the lamp and turns over.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The digital clock on the nightstand reads: **3:02 am.** Sam and
Lila are asleep. Lila's toes edge out from under the covers.

The closet door opens, heavy breathing is heard from inside.
Something emerges, low to the ground, scampering.

Just then, a scaly hand rises out from under the bed and
lightly strokes her foot. She awakens, alarmed. She nudges
Sam awake.

LILA

Sam?

SAM

Hmm?

LILA

Sam?!

SAM

What, honey? For the love of God,
what now?

LILA

Something licked my foot!

SAM
(half asleep)
Maybe it was the dog.

LILA
Sam, we don't have a dog.

SAM
Okay, I'll get you one this weekend.

LILA
Sam?!

Sam, groggy, rises out of bed, crosses around to Lila's side and tucks her foot in under the sheet. He tucks the sheet under the bed. He crosses back over to his side and covers his head with the sheet.

LILA (CONT'D)
I know what I felt, Sam.

SAM
(under sheet)
Just count some sheep and go to sleep.
Good God, I'm rhyiming at three in
the morning.

Lila, on edge, has trouble closing her eyes.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The digital clock on the nightstand reads: **3:30 am.**

The closet door opens and the dark FIGURE emerges from the closet, once again, low to the ground. It creeps along the floor and crawls towards the bed.

A moment passes...

Sam and Lila sleep peacefully. Suddenly, a hand slaps both of them across their faces, causing them to wake.

SAM & LILA
(in unison)
Hey, what's the big idea?!... Honey!
What?!

SAM
Why'd you hit me?!

LILA
Me? You hit me!

SAM
I did not!

LILA
Did too!

SAM
You hit me first!

LILA
Did not!

SAM
Well if you didn't do it and I didn't
do it --

Suddenly, the bedroom door BURSTS in. Sam and Lila SCREAM. Frankie and Melanie stand in the doorway, pissed. Melanie holds her beloved Timmy the Teddy Bear.

FRANKIE
Is this some kind of payback for all
the years we kept you up at night
when we were babies?!

LILA
Frankie, Melanie, we're very sorry.

MELANIE
You made Timmy nervous.

SAM
I'm sorry. We're both sorry, Timmy.
(to himself)
What am I saying?

LILA
We will be more quiet this time, we
promise.

FRANKIE
One more peep out of you two and
you're gonna get it.

MELANIE
Hmph.

The kids close the bedroom door and head back to their own room.

SAM

We just got threatened by our own children. The fruit of our loins.

LILA

Can you blame them? We're like big hypocrites. We tell them there's no Boogeyman and then we start scaring ourselves silly.

SAM

We?

LILA

You know what I mean.

They both lie down, frustrated each facing the opposite direction.

LILA (CONT'D)

Why do we lie to our children?

SAM

Huh?

LILA

Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny -- why do we lie?

SAM

Because our parents lied to us.

LILA

What about the Boogeyman?

SAM

Maybe some early caveman parents made him up so their children would depend on them for safety. Nothing means more to a parent than feeling like they're needed. That's probably how it all started.

LILA

That makes total sense. That's... that actually makes sense.

SAM

You say that like I'm normally incapable of making a valid point. Like I'm a dullard or something.

LILA
Not at all. It's why I married you.
For your big, huge, brain.

Sam laughs over on his side. Lila giggles.

LILA (CONT'D)
Oh, Sam, you little rascal. Stop
that, that tickles.

SAM
What?

Sam starts to chuckle a bit.

SAM (CONT'D)
Hey, what are you doing? That
tickles. Your hands are cold.

Lila stops laughing.

LILA
I'm not touching you.

Sam stops laughing.

SAM
I'm not touching you, either.

LILA
If I'm not touching you...

SAM
... and I'm not touching you...

Both Sam and Lila brace themselves. Their eyes go wide with fear. They spring up in bed and come face to face with

THE BOOGEYMAN

kneeling on their bed, staring at both of them. Sam and Lila panic, throwing their blanket over the Boogeyman's head.

They leap out of bed and rush out the room, screaming, slamming the door behind them.

INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sam and Lila burst in, startling Frankie and Melanie awake. Sam shuts the door behind them.

FRANKIE
What are you doing?

LILA
Can we sleep in here?

SAM
Just for tonight, please?

Frankie and Melanie look at each other, confused.

INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Frankie and Melanie lay in the same bed, while Sam and Lila now lay in Melanie's bed.

SAM
Thanks, kids.

LILA
We really appreciate it.

FRANKIE
This is weird.

MELANIE
How do you think I feel?

SAM
Goodnight, Frankie.

FRANKIE
Goodnight, Dad.

LILA
Goodnight, Melanie.

MELANIE
Goodnight, Mommy.

The nightlight shuts off. The room is pitch black.

BOOGEYMAN
(deep and menacing)
Goodnight all.

The Gundersons SCREAM in horror.

FADE OUT.