

The Open Door

She crept across her room slowly, breathing heavily, but calmly. As she approached her old, worn out light switch, she looked at it with disgust and sadness. Every time she flicked that switch to turn the light off, *it* came back.

"The *thing*'s not attracted to light, Kaitlyn thought, "but darkness, pure darkness. And every time it visits, *it* leaves a scar somewhere, physically, or in my heart and mind." She sighed and finally brought her steady, pale and bony hand to the switch, slowly, gradually, the lamp dimmed, then faded.

Fearless, Kaitlyn trudged to her bed, feeling as if going up a 90° angle. Then, she crawled into bed, the blankets making a crisp, folding sound. Kate thought it was soothing, relaxing. Her head touched the pillow, and she started to feel her eyes rest, not knowing or understanding how she ever managed to fall asleep each and every night, with the *thing* hiding around in her apartment. Finally, Kate decided, "No more wondering, and no more thoughts." She shut her aquamarine-blue eyes and drifted off to not Dreamland, but Nightmare Avenue.

The clock, it read 2:14am. Kaitlyn was half-awake and half-asleep. She could see the *thing* hovering over her bedpost; it looked like a random area of fog, but it was distorted into something, a figure, or a human, almost, but of fog, black fog. Not like the interior of a house fire, but a clean, black fog. *It* had eyes too, but they were only eerie black pupils, with no irises. Not human. Its arms extended and puffed out slowly, like a cloud being dragged by a jet. *It* took Kate by the neck, and whispered in a threatening way, "Close it. Close the door you left open, the door that I came through. Don't you remember that night, sweetheart?" Then, it just left, disappeared, as if there was never a demon possibly from hell invading her room, and threatening her.

2:26am; was Kate tired. But no, she just couldn't fall asleep again. She went into the bathroom, locked the door, and examined the switchblades and tore open her skin, down to her flesh. They were from when she opened the door.

It was three years ago, when Kate had first gotten this apartment as a Sweet 16 birthday present. The best to the worst birthday present ever. Her father was part of the untrusted government, so he slipped his way into allowing Kate to live on her own. The third night that she first moved in, she wanted to familiarize herself with the new place. It was the only apartment with "a history" and a second floor and an attic, so there was more to explore. As Kaitlyn was storing boxes in the attic, she came across a strange, ancient-looking puzzle on a little door that she could just fit into; "Thank god for being skinny," Kate thought. Customarily, she was the curious person and had to try it out. It wasn't hard for her, considering she was "another Nancy Drew", so it opened. She took a heavy box, filled with shattered lamps and other pieces of useless material, and placed it in front of the open door like a door stopper, because who knows what will happen with mysterious doors. Kate crawled inside, and realized once she made it in a bit, there was plenty of room to stand. It was a passageway, leading to a tapestry, nailed carefully and sturdily to the wall. Making the biggest mistake of her life, she read the tapestry out loud.

"As the moon rises upon thee, fear not, but draw upon strength of darkness and, mourn to their memories in scars and regret. With the heart of a killer, let it be thy new spirit. Stay firm in knowledge, and everything else, and fear now the ravages of the darkness that has now been sentenced. For, foolish child, as you regret, the secrets of this house shall dawn

in thy soul." She waited; nothing happened. Feeling a bit foolish and slightly confused, Kate walked back, ducked down, and exited the passageway, not realizing that what she just read, was a curse. Suddenly, a horrid scream had portrayed in her head, or was it her head? It was awfully realistic. A dark figure had formed and touched Kaitlyn in the gentlest way, but she winced and cried in pain. She wanted to see what the strange figure had caused, so she attempted to kick the box out of the way, but stubbed her toe. Exclaiming and cussing, she limped down the attic stairs, to the bathroom, *leaving the door open.*

"Leaving the door open!" screamed Kaitlyn, loud enough to wake the neighbors. "This is all my fault! I left the door conveniently open for that *thing*. I have to change this!" She had not realized she was talking to herself. It was 2:52am, too late to go close the door right now. Closing a door sounded very simple, but Kate knew it was more complex than shutting the bathroom door that stood behind her. She decided that tomorrow, when the evil demon came back, was the time to lure, and to close doors. Now, Kate marched happily back to her room, crawled back into bed, and fell asleep quickly, this time arriving at Dreamland.

Beep beep beep! Went the alarm clock. Kaitlyn moaned and hit snooze, and wondered why the alarm was not turned off on a Saturday morning. Kate's tired eyes moved to the clock, "7:34am." Deciding that she couldn't fall back asleep, she crawled out of bed and headed to the kitchen to make some breakfast. She approached the fridge, opened it, and took out some bacon, eggs, and pancake batter. Then, she fumbled through the pantry and found a frying pan. The stove fire started as Kaitlyn turned the knob, and put the pan on top of the fire. She tore open the bacon packaging with her teeth, not minding the raw pork taste, peeled all the bacon off the plastic and into the pan. With the bacon sizzling, Kate finally sat down and sighed. She felt as if she wasn't ready to close the door, because she had no idea what to do and expect. Kaitlyn's eyes wandered, and suddenly stopped at something sitting untouched on the dining room table. As if the strange object was magnetizing, she was pulled over. When the object was in clear vision, Kaitlyn realized it was only an old copy of "The Open Door," by Evanescence, which was one of the band's albums, and Kaitlyn's favorite. Just then did she come to realize what the title was. "The Open Door..." she turned the CD case to the song sheet on the back, and read it through, "Sweet Sacrifice, Call Me When You're Sober, Weight of the World, Lithium, Cloud Nine, Snow White Queen, Lacrymosa, Like You, Lose Control, The Only One, Your Star, All That I'm Living For, Good Enough..." Kaitlyn wasn't sure what this playlist meant, or if the message could help her or not, but she kept it anyway. It felt important, priority to her.

Suddenly Kate remembered the bacon and quickly got up and turned off the stove fire. She opened one of the cabinets and took out a maroon red plate, set it on the dining table, and used a spatula to move the bacon onto the plate. Kaitlyn took the eggs and cracked them against the countertop, and let the insides pour and spread onto the pan. She threw out the shells and sat back down, crunching on some bacon. Again, she held the Evanescence album in her hands and stared heavily at the playlist.

"What could this mean?" she pondered, feeling a bit frustrated. She breathed a heavy sigh and took a glance at the eggs sizzling on the pan. The bright yellow yolk began to look well done, no longer a watery raw substance. Kate waited a few more moments, then took the wooden spatula, removed it from the pan, and placed it onto the plate with bacon. She also spotted a bag of sliced bread, and took out two slices, and threw everything together. As she chewed quietly on her breakfast sandwich, she turned to take a look at the oven clock. 8:13am. She had a long day ahead of her.

To pass time, she called her friend, Phoenix and invited her over. Kaitlyn most definitely did not want to leave the house today, just for cautious reasons. Phoenix rang the doorbell,

filling Kate's house with a charming melody. She hurried to the door and greeted her friend. She was extremely beautiful; very long, slim body, and glowing hazel eyes. Her short bouncy hair swept across her left eye and fell down gently to her shoulders. It was an astonishing and unique red, very deep red. Phoenix stepped inside and planted herself on the velvet, maroon red couch and the two girls conversed for a few hours.

A tone played. Phoenix dug through her bag, reaching for her cell phone. She picked it up, with an occasional nodding, and "yeah. Yep. Okay."

Phoenix placed her phone back in her bag and turned to Kaitlyn. "My mother wants me home. I'll call you later, Kate."

As she left, she gave Kaitlyn a worried glance and added, " *Call me*. You look really tense. Let me know how you hold up. A reassuring smile came across Phoenix's tan, heart-shaped face. Then, she turned and closed the front door behind her, leaving Kaitlyn to wish that closing *the* door would be as easy as Phoenix closed the front door. Just a gentle grab of the knob, and *click*, it was closed.

Kaitlyn took her unsteady eyes away from the front door and listened; the only sound that was produced in her apartment was the gentle *tick, tick, tick* of the large Grandfather clock that stood tall and proud, but at the same time, leaning against the red drywall. Sometimes the sound of the clock thoroughly frightened Kaitlyn, and she had the urge to topple it over to make it stop. But afterwards, she only felt guilt for ever thinking about it. That clock completed the entire apartment; it was given to her by her, mind the pun, grandfather, who had been killed long ago. Kate winced at the agony and reached out for the clock, admiring the smooth wood carvings. The clock boomed with sound, indicating that another full hour had passed. 3:00pm. There was still time, too much time. Kate wanted to finish an errand, but she just did not want to leave the house. But on the other hand, there was nothing to do at her apartment either. Kaitlyn bit her lip, and grabbed her red trench coat.

"Nothing is going to happen. I've never seen that *thing* appear during broad daylight anyway," she reassured herself as she locked the front door. The parking lot was a few steps away from the building, but when Kate finally got in the car, she felt as if that had just taken an eternity. There was just way too much stress weighing down on her today.

Driving was a bad idea. She swerved and sped along the narrow roads, people sticking their heads out the window and shouting a few unpleasant words. Kaitlyn could literally feel the stress pushing down on her shoulders now.