

Title: In the Closet
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In The Closet

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There is a monster in my front closet. And yes, I know how that sounds. But I was just waking up from a nice little nap on the sofa and I saw it. It was just a flash of something furry and dark creeping under the closet door. Moving out and then quickly back in as if it could tell I was looking at it. At first I thought it was the cat, but the cat died at the vet's office weeks ago. It's not like I forgot she died, I just forgot to remind every aspect of my life that we didn't have a cat anymore. I still bought cat food at the store, still put fresh litter in the box...why do I even have that litterbox? It doesn't make any sense.

I guess the question is: What do I do? I mean, I can't very well call the police and tell them there's a monster in my closet. They'd hang up. If I call 911 they might listen long enough to make me a reservation at the nut-house, excuse me...the mental hospital. But I'm never going back there

again. I hate being away from my brother almost as much as I hate that horrible place. Everyone talks down to you and the food is terrible.

I look down at the book I'd been reading before my nap. A Separate Peace lay pressed open on the floor. Not a good way to leave a book, very bad for the binding. I love John Knowles, and his bright vivid portrayals of young men. But there'll be no more reading for me tonight now that I have a monster to contend with. I put the bookmark back in and fiddle absently with the little tassel on the top. It could be any terrifying thing; and there'd be no one around to come help me. How horrible! An unnamable, moaning was coming from my coat closet. Just imagine what a beast like that might be doing to my coats! Or Jonas's. Of course, Jonas wouldn't care nearly as much about his coats...not a very complimentary thing to think about one's only brother; but Jonas simply didn't take good care of his things.

However, coats were not the issue, I'm alone in the apartment with the very real problem of how to deal with the moaning monster in the front closet. I want to wonder how it got there but can't imagine how knowing such a thing could help. I suddenly wish I had Jonas's brute strength. I am vaguely aware that my whole body is literally trembling with an awful sensation that must be fear. Dad was always disappointed that I wasn't "tough" like Jonas; though at the time I couldn't see what use physical toughness would be in real life. Now, alone and cowering from an unseen moaning thing in my own home, I have to wonder if Dad hadn't been right all along. Maybe God *does* hate Faggots like me.

I look around the kitchen for something to hold the closet dweller off with--just until Jonas gets home. But wait--he's out with that woman, that--Shelly or Misty or some stupid thing. Loopy blonde curls that looks straight from Mtv and a skirt so short it looked like maybe she had just forgotten to wear pants. Who knew if Jonas would even be home tonight? She did not look like the type to send her date home early with a peck on the cheek and a cold shower.

Okay, Monster, I think stupidly, It's you and me.

Right. Who the hell else would it be?

I look frantically thru the kitchen for something to slow it down. As it was, it bumped feebly against the closet door. But that wouldn't hold it forever. Oven cleaner. Oh man, I'd sprayed that on my legs once on accident. We were camping and I thought it was bug spray. Hurt like hell, and Dad was sure to tell everyone that I'd *screamed like a woman*. For as much shame as I brought him, he was always pretty keen to tell people about it.

I took the oven cleaner and read the instructions. Turn oven to cleaning cycle. Wait...I'm losing my mind here. All I have to do is point and shoot, right. But I can't just open up the closet door. Who knows what the hell kind of thing is in there? It might be huge, it might go crazy, and it might--oh shit. I've really got to calm down.

Okay. Okay. I'm ready. I'm just going to spray some under the door, and if I hurt it, I'll know. Then I'll open the door and spray it some more. I

don't even have to look at it; I just have to spray and then slam it shut...okay calm down. Okay. Here I go.

I walk slowly to the door and just then I realize that I'm wearing sock feet on the slick tile. Dad always said to wear shoes in the house but I never did. Damn, why didn't I ever listen? No matter, it was too late now.

I hold the can under the door and spray a few times. I hear louder moans inside the closet, and then a loud, high-pitched scream. This is it—go for it. I fling the door open with my eyes shut tight. I spray and spray while the thing screams and screams. I think I am screaming too...I'm not even sure. I slam the door shut again and lean against it for a second, then I jump away. What was I thinking—leaning against it? It could come busting through the thin paneling on the cheap apartment closet door.

I look around, wondering if it inflicted any damage on me. I suspect that it sprayed me with a warm kind of...oh, it seems that I have literally pissed myself from the terror. Suddenly my greatest fear is cleaning up this mess before Jonas gets home...he'd never let me hear the end of it—monster or no.

There's still no clue what kind of thing it was inside. Some kind of animal judging by the sound. But almost human too. I hate that I'm not just a little braver, that I couldn't have looked for just a single second. Dad was right...all along. I try to shake his image from my head and look around for something to do this creature in with. There must be something

here; Jonas was a hunter for goodness sake! He hunted 3-4 nights a week these days. That's why he needed that great, big trunk in his bedroom.

And then, in what seems like a great distance, I hear the phone ringing. I want to answer, but who knows who it is. The machine picks up and I hear Jonas's voice, "Hello, this is Jonas, all you fine ladies leave a message and I'll call you right back." And then, sadly, mom's voice: "That's not funny you know; what will people think? You want them to come back around and..." On and on she talked as if anyone was listening. She'd be no help as usual. She was never any help to me at all.

I walk into Jonas's room, past the big army trunk on the floor and see it peeking out from a pile of his rugged clothes on the floor. It's so perfect it's almost unbelievable. An Axe. A real, live axe like a lumberjack might carry in that Monty Python song. I pull it out and notice that it is already filthy with mud or something. Goodness, Jonas never did take very good care of his things.

And I, for once, am going to go take care of my problem. The beast almost sounded like it was weeping behind the thick closet door. I almost wanted to let it out so the swinging axe wouldn't hurt my new winter coat; but I think (seeing Dad's face in my mind) *that's what a Faggot would do!*

Keeping my eyes tightly closed I open the closet door and bring the axe down. Swing and Whoosh! It makes a huge sound, and then buries itself in something soft and yielding. It's releases easily and I'm tempted to look, but I wait. I bring the axe up again and the thing makes a kind of

high-pitched humming sound but stops abruptly when I bring the axe down the second time. I open my eyes at last.

I walk back toward Jonas' room past the army trunk on the floor, and wondering why in the world I should want to open it and why I even have a key. It seems like this would be a good time to call the police; but I have no idea what to tell them. I think it would be best if I just wait for Jonas to get home.

Lying bloodied and well...dead in our coat closet is that woman...Misty or Sheila or something. She was supposed to be out with Jonas tonight. Why on earth would he leave her in the closet? Jonas never did take very good care of his things.