

Fear of the Dark

Walk alone down a country lane or poorly lit alleyway at night. You might expect it to be silent – after all, there is nobody there except you. But, in the blackness, just beyond that shadowy world that extends only to the limit of your sight, there are noises. The clink of something hitting stone, a footstep, or a sound that seems to be an animal snorting, but not quite. In the daytime, you could see there is nothing to fear, but, at night, you have no such reassurance. Without the security of sight, your imagination populates the darkness with monsters – wolves, creatures of horror, or worst of all, another human intending you harm.

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You walk faster, your heart beats harder, and you may make ready a weapon against a threat that might not even be there. Regardless, you long to be home, secure behind your own locked front door. You feel relief when you see your house, and you may even fumble with your keys before opening it and slamming it behind you. Tomorrow, you will walk the same route again in the daylight without fear, but tonight, you are simply relieved to be safe.

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Why are sounds frightening at night but not in the daytime?

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What creature is most likely to cause you harm?

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Are you afraid of the dark?