

Sweet shop vendors

A.M. FAHAD

We will chase after stringless kites
Down the road
Stop at sweet shops to taste the color
Of your eyes when your teeth sink in
To the flesh of a flower I picked for you
We will lay underneath moss-covered bridges
On patches of grass and wildflowers
The sky is running on empty these days and
We are all so exhausted
When the sun sets, we go back to hiding
Crumbling to the sound of the wind not ours
We look for light behind the rocks and
Every breath you take is a countdown till dawn
For when we can flood these empty lakes
With our tears
For now, I exist
And you are here too
And underneath the scanty seconds after every breath drawn
The little sweet shop vendors behind these
Smooth rocks, bubble wraps, and last night's leftovers
Call to us
To make our insipid world
A little bit sweeter

Fahad is still a university admission candidate.



ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

Facing the nightmare of darkness

RITURAJ BHOWMICK

Lighting struck everywhere. Amidst the enchanted woods, the howls of wolves echoed with a joyous "Awoo!". The bats danced merrily in the moon's embrace. Yet, in the midst of this wonder, my heart quivered with fear. With a shuddering voice I asked, "Do we have to go inside?" My voice echoed in the empty castle of darkness with its irresistible dark power willing to devour anyone in its way.

Let me tell you the story from the start.

One glorious morning, my friend and I played football as usual, as it is our favourite sport. With all the might in my bones, I kicked the ball with grace, and it soared beyond the boundaries of our playfield. To my surprise, it ventured

into the eerie shadows of the town's abandoned area, into the haunted house, which was a place of chilling tales, whispered fears, and rumours of the dark energy.

My friend and I looked at each other, unsure of what to do. We had always heard rumours about the abandoned house being cursed and haunted by ghosts. However, we didn't want to lose the ball, so we decided to go after it. As we walked towards the house, we noticed that the door was slightly open, swaying back and forth. We hesitated, but our curiosity got the best of us.

I headed there, taking a deep breath. While opening the door of the house, "Anyone here?" I called out, but the echoes of my voice were the only response. The silence was eerie, and the remnants of cockroaches added to my

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unease. Instantly, the door opened with a creaking sound, as I ventured forth, the chill of foreboding clung to my skin. Something about the house felt off, and my heart quivered with fear.

The air was filled with a choking mustiness, and every corner held secrets. Suddenly, a vampire, with his fangs glistening with fresh blood, materialised before us. Our hearts raced with fear as he proposed a mini game of hide and seek, with a dire consequence of being stuck within these walls forever if we lost. Though we knew the game was rigged, we accepted his offer and were soon joined by his other monstrous friends – witches, zombies, and ghouls. As we played, we overheard their villainous plans, and realised the true danger of our situation.

In a moment of quick thinking, we surrendered by crossing our fingers, fooling them into thinking we were ready to face death. With a laugh, we fled, clutching our life, as the gate opened before us.

The vampire got shocked by our cleverness, as he could only watch as we escaped his clutches. This harrowing experience taught us a valuable lesson to never again venture into such haunted realms.



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