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Narrative Project—Draft 1

Under the Darkness of Night

It was a Saturday night, probably in the 8:00 or 9:00 hour. I'd spent the entire afternoon and some of the evening shopping at the Franklin Mills Mall with a friend of mine, and as she and I spent the entire day walking, my feet felt sore and achy. Ouch. I began to feel the pain radiating up my lower legs. As I stand around in Burlington waiting for Ayesha to finish up whatever business she's taking care of in Customer Service, I started for the exit, thinking a chilly night air would remedy the discomfort in my legs and feet.

The second I'd pushed open the door, I, as I expected, was greeted by a comfortably-cool breeze that had swept through me, caressing my body. I stood a few feet from the exit/entrance doors, taking in the beautiful air, closing my eyes and smiling to myself. I opened my eyes and looked around, for Ayesha's car where I planned to wait, which I couldn't immediately see. Interestingly, the sky was pitch black but the streetlights all across the parking lot as well as the lights from inside and outside the building gave the night air a brownish-orange hue. There were small wet puddles of water scattered all over the ground and pavement, as well as little droplets

of water scattered all across the exteriors of the vehicles that had crowded the parking lot, as it had rained earlier that day. I love the rain. I love being out at night.

About a minute or so later, I saw Ayesha emerge from the mall carrying an array of large shopping bags packed with merchandise in her hands, approaching me.

"Finally!" I sighed, in almost a whisper, as rolled my eyes.

She and I began walking toward her red Kia Rio, making what had to have been a less-than-three-minute walk feel more like a thirty as the more steps I took, the more labored they've become, and the more laborious my steps, the more it felt like I couldn't take another. As soon as Ayesha unlocked her car doors, I immediately pulled open the front passenger side door and took my seat to begin the resting period my feet and legs so-badly needed. This just as Ayesha was standing behind her car, loading all our bags and merchandise we'd purchased that day in the trunk of our car.

Then a thought came to me.

I turned and watched her through the rear car window. Should I go help her, I wondered? A half of me wanted to help, while the other half wanted to stay seated while my feet rest, especially since she hadn't requested my assistance.

"Need any help back there?" I willingly offered, secretly hoping she'd say no so I wouldn't have to stand and walk for any longer than I needed to.

"Nah, I'm good!" Ayesha replied.

I was delighted she declined. I tried not to let it show. But I sighed in relief and faced front. Less standing and walking on my part. Was it wrong for me to feel delighted? Was it wrong for me to offer my help in hopes she'd turn it down? I just thought I'd have the decency to ask since after all this was my friend. Oh, the uncomfortable dilemma I've just found myself in. What if she said yes? That would've been a hole I dug myself in. Was it all wrong of me to do? My mind lingering on these theories did little to nothing to distract me from the pain I still felt on my feet. I pondered these thoughts for the good minute or two it took for Ayesha to finally close the trunk of her car as she then came up to me where I was sitting, informing me that she needed to handle one more thing at the Burlington Customer Service center.

"Are you gonna be okay in here?" asked Ayesha.

"Yeah! Oh, yeah," I immediately and confidently affirmed.

"Okay, I'll be right back."

She then closed the car door and I watched her as she walked back into the mall. Once she disappeared into the building, that's when I felt completely alone... in a frightening sense. I was alone but there were mall patrons and shoppers all around me, going in and out of their vehicles and in and out the mall, some of whom were also carrying shopping bags. I could hear

very faint conversations taking place at the parking lot as people were walking but that was it and did little to nothing to ease the fear that was slowly racing through my body like a vicious wild virus.

It was silence. Eerie silence. It was dark in here. Eerie darkness. So silent you could hear a spider slowly climbing its tiny legs up a wall. I heard a small thud of something drop behind me and I instantly felt chills going up my spine. I knew logically it was an object slowly sliding down to the floor of a trunk but it didn't stop my heightened senses. As hard as I tried not to dwell on "scary stuff" my efforts were futile and wasted. I asked myself, "Was I really going to be okay in here alone?" Ayesha was right to ask this. I'm now questioning whether or not I was right in saying I would be. Ayesha has been made well-aware of my liking for horror films and "scary stuff," as well as the thrills they bring me. I like being in the dark. But I'm afraid of being in the dark. This experience quickly became a little more than I bargained for. Background music tracks heard in horror movies began to fill my mental ears. This became a terrifying experience. I wondered: "What if there's a ghost in here? Am I going to be attacked by the ghost? It is too dark and quiet in here!"

I turned on the radio in an attempt to kill away my fears. It was loud at first but I gradually turned the volume to a comfortable level. It was still too dark. The windows were shut. All of them. I pressed the button below the window next to me to open it—nothing happened.

"This is interesting," I thought. "I can turn on the radio without starting the ignition but I can't open the window..."

I unlocked and opened the door, keeping the radio at a low level. The light comes on but the open-door chime is nonstop and gets more and more annoying by the micro-second. Even if that weren't the case, what if there's a carjacker nearby? I shut the door. Darkness.

As my paranoia reached its peak point, I finally stepped out the vehicle. I first made sure Ayesha's keys were not in here and closed and locked all the doors. I power-walked back into the mall, as Ayesha was just exiting it.

"What happened?" she asked, visibly concerned, seeing the frightened look on my face.
"What's wrong?"

"Oh, nothing," I replied. "I just got a little scared; that's all."

"You probably must be watching too many horror movies," she said, half-teasingly, as she put a comforting hand on the back of my shoulder, rubbing my back as we walked back to the car. I certainly didn't mind being inside a dark car with her with me! Ayesha and I then began our ride home.