

Alice roamed the abandoned mansion, ignoring cobwebs and creaky floors. Wind fluttered through a cracked window, the curtain billowing in the breeze. She watched a dark, bruised cloud cover the harvest moon before heading downstairs. Voices still haunt her, creeping into dreams that wake her and send her scurrying for cover. Years of experience taught her how to hide amongst the shadows, move unseen through the oversized house. In the living room, she watched the newcomer try the light switch, and backed into the drapes. At the rustle, he turned, eyes wide, hands trembling, but didn't see her ghostly shape.



Author's Note:

It was inevitable it would happen that I'd end up with the dreaded horror genre. It's not one I read or write. I checked a book out of the library back on *The Island*. It was by an author I'd met at our library in the mountains where he'd put on a fantastic kids' show that, to this day, my family still quotes. When I spotted the book, I couldn't wait to read it. I never got through the first chapter. I also didn't sleep that night. The day I'm writing this I even confessed to my gang how much the poisonous spider scene in *The Princess Diaries* scared the bejeebers out of me the first time I read it.

Mind you, it didn't help that I had to get up and creep through a dark house to use the toilet. Or, that when I tried to creep back to my room, I was unaware the dog followed me, so when I turned to see what the noise behind me was, all I saw were two glowing eyes. It's a wonder I didn't wake the house with my screaming.

One of my biggest fears was drawing horror for the [NYC Midnight](#). Thankfully, I didn't, but I read a lot of the tips and suggestions they had about genres people often shy away from them. Horror being one, and the reminder that what horrifies one of us might not scare another.

So when I drew the short stick, and ended up with horror, exploring an abandoned mansion, and ghostly. I had an instant idea for what I could write and then remembered I'd already written [Agatha's story](#). Thus it was back to the drawing board for me, but once I landed on Alice's name, she wrote the story herself. In fact, it took fewer revisions to bring this story full circle than it has any of the others I've written in a while, and most of it was just rearranging sentences and swapping out words.

Did I hit the horror genre? I'm not sure, so I'll let you decide.

The Reluctant Author 