

Walk

By Nuria Everett

It wasn't a cold night, nor a windy one. But it was dark. Oh, so very dark. It poured out of crevices and alleyways, drowning the world in its anti-light. It pressed down on you until you squirmed and twisted with fear, constantly looking back, only to see the darkness hot on your heels, but no matter how fast you ran, how scared you were, it was always, *always*, right behind you...

I stepped outside, torch in one hand, the other on the door. I pulled it shut. It bounced on the latch a few times before locking with an awful, final *clunk*. Turning around, I could see nothing without the light from the house so, hastily, I switched on the torch, and it displayed its weak light onto the muddy-brown path in front of me.

"Stupid torch..." I muttered under my breath; it was usually a lot brighter. Maybe the batteries were running out.

Or maybe, came a voice from my mind, *the darkness is too thick for it*.

I shook myself off. Where that thought had come from, I didn't know, but it wasn't going to hinder me from my task in the slightest. My right foot swept forward automatically, the boot connecting neatly with the ground. The left followed obediently, and soon my coat was swaying with the steady, rhythmic pulse of my footsteps, my jaw set in determination and my trembling hands clasped firmly around the torch as if it were the last light in the world. I didn't look anywhere but forwards.

The night was so still, so calm, so empty, I suddenly and frighteningly became aware of every little movement I made.

I had just rounded the first corner when a deathly chill snaked up my back. It didn't stop, either; it wrapped its icy fingers around my head in an invisible clamp, and I clenched my teeth ever harder, so much so that I thought they would crack. I halted abruptly, my foot rooted to the ground, as if it were nailed to it, and the numbing presence in my head started pounding with a dull pulse, like it was continuing the broken rhythm of my footsteps.

I glanced around fearfully, and my eyes were drawn to the sky. It was a terrifying, inky black. There was an infinite, gaping hole where the moon should've been, and it looked like each star had been pinched out and smothered with the giant hands of the night sky. *It must be cloudy*, I reasoned, for I could think of no other explanation for why the usual, comforting silvery glow of the moon and stars could not be visible. The problem was, I couldn't see any clouds.

I forced my gaze away from the horrifying void, and swung the light around, silently thanking my only companion as it illuminated the path. There was nothing there, like I expected, but the menacing presence lingered. I directed my eyes forward to continue my journey...

The light flickered out.