

## Black Footprints

Faith Myers was recently hired by Quality Services, a local cleaning company in the Pittsburgh Pennsylvania area, to clean a townhouse that was used as a display model for Ryan's Homes. The home was completely furnished, and Faith was told that the job would be fairly easy since there was no one living in the unit, and the only dirt would be from the tours that were given.

Faith arrived at the Lehey Townhouse on Wednesday, Halloween night at 7:00 P.M. She wanted to get in and out in about 3 hours so that she could go to a friend's Halloween party at a local apple orchard. They were having hayrides, haunted apple hunts, and the orchards were transformed into a haunted tour, as people walked under the trees they would get the scare of their life.

When Faith pulled into the drive way, the front motion light came on exposing a full view of the house.

She had all of the cleaning supplies in the car, including the vacuum. This meant she had to make two trips in order to get it all in the house.

Faith carried all of the supplies to the front door before she opened it. So with a supply bag hanging off of one shoulder and a bucket of chemicals in the other hand she unlocked the door and it slowly swung open. As the interior of the house was revealed, Faith just stood there with her mouth open in shock. The bucket with chemicals fell to the ground as she lost her grip on it. As she looked around the foyer all she could see was a black, oozing, slimy substance hanging from everything. It was dripping from the ceiling, and picture frames hanging on the

wall. It looked like a car engine had exploded and all of the black, slimy oil had splattered all over the house. On the floor were black footprints made up of the same slimy substance. The footprints led down the hall to an open door on the right.

A million thoughts were going through Faith's mind. What should she do? Should she call the police, or contact her employer? Does she dare follow the footprints to see if maybe it was someone from the maintenance crew? This late at night, she was afraid it could be anything, and remembered all the horror films she had seen with this same scenario. But the impulse to find out what it was, took over, and she started to walk down the black, slime covered hallway towards the open door.

Everywhere she looked she saw the black slimy substance all over the walls, and furniture. A foul smell also wafted through the air and made its way into her nostrils, and she gagged a little in response to it. As she looked at the open door, it was as if something was pulling her towards it, some invisible force beckoning her to come.

When she finally made it to the open door she peered down into the oil black darkness at the bottom of a wooden stair case. As her imagination played tricks on her she thought she saw a shadowy figures moving, and the glow of red eyes looking at her and penetrating her soul. "Get a grip on your self Faith!" she whispered aloud.

She finally worked up the courage to start down the stairs, but had to walk down in the blackness because the light switch did not work. One rung at a time she slowly made her way down and all she could hear was the occasional squeak from wood rubbing against nail as she stepped on each rung. As she got to the last step and slowly set her foot on the concrete floor she let out a high pitched squeal that sounded like a cat when its tail was stepped on.

She thought that she had just stepped in a lake of Jell-O, and the feeling freaked her out.

“Hello! Is there anyone down here?” she asked with a frightened crack in her voice.

“Who are you!” a voice seethed out of the darkness causing Faith to jump back a step or two.

“M-m-my n-name is Faith” she stuttered. “I am the cleaning person for this house. Who are you and w-w-what are you doing here?” she asked.

A dark shadowy figure appeared out of the darkness from the corner of the room. She could barely see him with what little light was penetrating from above. It was almost as if the darkness was pushing back the light, in a struggle for dominance.

“My name is Adam. I used to clean this house. Unfortunately I found myself enclosed behind the brick wall down here.”

“By whom?” She asked

“The owner, Mark Thompson.”

“Why would he do that?” She asked as she stepped off the bottom rung and now both feet were in the lake of oozing slime which Faith thought was Jell-O.

“I discovered something about him I wasn’t supposed to. So he stuck me in here.”

“So how were y-y-you able to g-g-get out?” Faith asked filled with even more fear than before.

“That, my dear was a total shock to me as well. It seems that when Mark bricked me in, he didn’t do as good of a job as he thought, I was able to push through and get myself free.”

Faith just stared, confused and still shaken by the fact that this man was down here enclosed behind the brick wall.

“I still do not understand why he would have done this to you.”

Adam just smiled and walked over to sit on the bottom rung of stairs.

“Let’s just say that I found out about some shady business deals he had been involved in and he didn’t like that very much. I had threatened to go to the police if he didn’t cut me in on some of the profits.” Adam let out a small laugh, one that comes from the throat and not out of the mouth.

“So he decided to burry you behind a wall to keep you from talking?” Faith asked.

Faith looked down at Adam as he was sitting on the steps, she saw that he had a hole in the blue shirt he was wearing, on right side of his chest. As she continued to look Faith saw two more holes in his shirt, they both appeared to be blood red. Her heart leaped a couple times, and she brought her hand to her mouth and gasped.

“Ahh. I see you have discovered my secret. I was hoping you didn’t notice, but three bloody holes in your cheat are hard to conceal.”

“Ar-Are you dead? No, what am I saying.. I mean, did you die..., are you ok?” Faith was so scared and confused; she didn’t know what to say.

“Yes, the owner shot me three times, and then buried me behind the brick wall thinking he would never see me again. But he forgot one important problem with his plan.” Adam said as he stood up.

“W-w-what did he f-f-orget?” Faith asked now shaking.

“It is Halloween my dear, everyone knows that the dead get to roam the earth on Halloween night.

“What is all of this black, slimy stuff all of the house?”

“Like I said, it is Halloween night, the veil that divides the living from the dead has been

lifted and the two worlds become as one on Halloween.” Adam answered with a sinister grin.

“This is what the world of the dead always looks like. Death and decay, and it effects everything it touches. The touch of death is very strong.”

Faith took a couple steps back, not knowing what to think or do.

“S-so, why is it only in this house, and not outside?”

“Ahhh, yes, that would be the visible echoes of my murder. You see, when someone is murdered violently with so much hatred, the echoes and remanence of the event sometimes reveals itself on Halloween night as well. The blackness and sliminess of the scene represent the darkness and hatred of the heart of the person who committed the murder.” Adam smirked a little.

“As you have already seen before walking down here, the owner shot me three times with a shotgun, and my insides splattered all over the walls, and ceiling. He walked through the blood to bring me down here, leaving the dark black footprints behind him. Even though he cleaned the scene, he can never get rid of the emotion and darkness that created it. The scene is also a reminder to me, of what I need to do.”

Faith was now up against the brick wall where Adam had come out of. She was holding her arms in a cross fashion. Staring at Adam not sure of what was going to happen next.

“S-so what d-do you need to d-do?” Faith asked.

Adam walked closer to Faith, and smiled.

“Another little secret not to many people know about, is that not only can the dead roam the earth on Halloween night, but they can also in certain cases, switch places with the living in order to exact revenge on their killers. In my case, I was only killed 4 days ago, so my anger and vengeance is still strong, and nothing will stand in my way of making sure that Mark pays.”

Faith just stood there, eyes wide and shaking even more.

“What do you mean, ‘S-switch places’?” Faith asked as she swallowed hard.

“Unfortunately my dear, you are in the wrong place at the wrong time. As unpleasant as it may sound, I need to switch places with you so I can make sure the owner pays for what he did to me. In simple terms, it means a life for a life.” Adam answered as he reached out to grab Faith.

Faith started to scream but could only get out a small squeal as Adam covered her mouth and nose until she passed out.

When Faith came to, it was completely black. She tried to feel around with her hands, but she could not put them out very far, there was a solid structure right in front of her, and her back was also against a hard solid structure. She could not move. She was trapped.

“Hello! Is anyone there! Hello! I need help!” Faith screamed, but no one answered.

Up-stairs in the kitchen, Mark the owner had been making a pot of coffee. The sun had not come up yet, but was starting to break over the horizon which could be seen through the kitchen window.

As he was making the pot of coffee, he saw a note attached to the refrigerator with a magnet. He walked slowly over to it, as his mouth dropped and eye widened in fear, he grabbed the note as the magnet crashed to the floor.

The note read:

I still know what you did.

P.S. You cannot get rid of me that easily.

Mark looked out the kitchen window with eyes now even wider and fear encased his face. He let out a hopeless scream as the sun began to appear above the tops of the trees.

Down in the basement, Faith was no longer trying to talk, instead, a bright light

penetrated through the cracks in the brick wall. As it began to fade all you could hear was a dim voice crying out, “Next Halloween! Next Halloween!”