

Lucky

I think that evil is all around us, because humanity ... what's left of it ... is all around us. I used to think evil was a terrible person, like Hitler, or a scourge on mankind, like an earthquake that kills thousands and leaves many more homeless, sitting around fires in the middle of a dark and desolate landscape. We gathered here tonight behind a deserted restaurant, trying to stay warm, huddling in front of a burning pile of furniture from the house next door.

It happened on Sunday morning and I was dressed for church and not in my warmest clothes. The men around me at the fire are not acting like we're on a camping trip. They look scared. They make me fearful and they haven't asked if I'm all right or told me not be afraid, as they normally would comfort a youngster. Nor have they even bothered to assure me that everything is going to be all right. I'm really scared that everything is NOT going to be all right. I'm not going to have any supper tonight again and may freeze to death before morning. My father is distant. I think he knows something about my mother,

but he's not going to tell me. He said my brothers are out looking for food, but I doubt it. They're too young to be out and about in the dark on a school night. When he lied to me, he stared into the fire and didn't turn to look at me. Somehow I know that means something is very wrong.

I hear them coming again. What an awful sound, a tearing and scraping. Screaming and fire everywhere. My father has crushed himself into a fetal position, face buried in his knees. I try to pull his head up by his hair, but he is rigid and locked up, shaking. I want him to save me, but he won't. He is terrified. He is as good as dead, I know, as I run from him, run from death. I wish with all my heart and soul to wake up and find this was a dream. And then I wake up screaming and find it is indeed a dream. But I'm left with the distinct impression that it is the last time in my life that I will wake up from a living nightmare. The rest will have to be lived and endured. Alone.

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