

Monica Petersen, 17  
1<sup>st</sup> Prize

### The Haunted Hallway

Two weeks later, it happened again. The subtle rustling of papers and unearthly moan reverberated down the hall. Then the glimmer appeared. When I first saw it, I thought it was a figment of my imagination. As it came into focus, it was unmistakable what I had come across. Those sounds and glimmer only occur at night. I have never heard of anyone else seeing this. But I did, twice. However the second time, I was prepared.

I was at school late one night, working on a project in the library. Winter was coming so by seven it was already pitch black. I hadn't realized how late it had gotten until I got a text from my mom asking me if I was ever coming home for dinner. The school had been empty for hours. I packed up everything and grabbed my car keys. It was eerie being alone at school on a Friday night.

I walked up the steps into the hallway and looked around. The halls were illuminated by the dim safety lights and the dark glow of the moon that seeped through the clouds. I was heading down the hall when I heard the rustling of papers. It was faint initially, but slowly grew louder. I turned around expecting to see a harried teacher emerge from a classroom, but no one appeared. With a little apprehension, I walked faster down the hall. Then I heard the moan. The haunting sound was like a lightning bolt to my heart. I began to sprint down the hall, with my backpack thumping against my back the whole way.

I turned an abrupt corner, and stopped dead in my tracks. There it was, at the end of the hall. A faint ethereal bluish-white glimmer next to a locker. As I watched, the glimmer grew stronger and came into focus. It took on the shape of a teenage girl with a backpack over one

shoulder and a stack of books in the other. The girl was peering into her locker, searching for something.

Another shape appeared and grabbed the waist of the girl. She turned around, smiled, and kissed the other figure, a boy. He was wearing a letterman's jacket and smiling at her. They talked to each other, but I noticed I could not hear their words. As I watched this, the urge to sneeze tickled my nose. I tried to stifle it, but my sneeze echoed through the hall. The figures' heads whipped to look at me, and upon seeing me, they disappeared. I looked around trying to see if they reappeared somewhere, but they had vanished into the night.

The door leading outside was at the end of the hall, and I headed toward it with more conviction than before. But as I passed the locker where the ghosts had stood, I could not help noticing a name scrawled on it in permanent marker: Sophia Wellington. I made a mental note of the name, then bolted down the hallway toward the door. Once outside, I darted to my lone car in the parking lot and refused to look back.

At home, I ran up the stairs to my room and jumped on the computer. There had to be something about Sophia Wellington somewhere on the Internet. I searched her name and an aggregation of results popped up. Sophia Wellington did not exist, but there was a girl a few decades ago named Sophia Kingsley who dated a boy named Brad Wellington. That had to be the couple I saw in the hall.

Sophia and Brad, I read, both went to my school, and were about to graduate when something terrible happened. On the night of the senior prom, Sophia was found dead wearing her prom dress in the forest near school. There were pages and pages of articles detailing the police's search for clues leading to her death. Her boyfriend, friends, family, and even

townspeople gave testimonies about her charming personality and tragic death. In the end, nothing was uncovered.

For some peculiar reason, I felt a connection to Sophia. A desire to unearth what happened to her coursed through my veins. During the next two weeks, I researched all I could about Sophia, her life, and our town. Nevertheless, just like the police years ago, I came up empty-handed. At that moment, I decided there was only one thing left to do.

Exactly two weeks after the first encounter, I planned to see Sophia again. I worked late in the library that Friday night, finishing my college applications and catching up on my reading. At seven, I gathered up my things and went into the hall. Like the first time, I heard a rustling sound. The rustling was followed by a moan.

I headed to the hallway where her locker was, and I saw the glimmer. The glow focused itself and Sophia appeared, searching through her locker again. The scene played out the same as before, including Brad coming up behind her and kissing her. They talked for a minute and then the interaction changed. Sophia's smile dissipated and she looked angered by something Brad had said. He tried to plead with her, but she looked like she refused to listen. Sophia tried to walk away, but he grabbed her arm. Pulling her arm out of his grasp, she slapped him hard and stormed off. I watched her eerie shape disappear as she headed for the door.

I observed Brad for a minute, and noticed a shimmer next to me. With a muffled start, I jumped and realized Sophia was materializing next to me. I looked at her for a moment, and realized that she was pointing to Brad. "What?" I mouthed. She continued to stare at me while pointing at Brad. I followed her finger and there was a dark evil glare in Brad's eyes.

"It was him, wasn't it?" I whispered. She nodded. And with that, both figures vanished into the night.

Savannah Prather 14  
2<sup>nd</sup> Prize  
Déjà Vu

Two weeks later,

It happened again

My life

Was turned up-side-down,

When I had just gotten it

Right-side-up.

The trouble I would get in this time

Was too much

To think about

And that's when I realized

Déjà vu

...Again

It was

Déjà vu

Of déjà vu

And so I asked

“What day is it?”

And I was saddened to hear

That I was in the past

...Again

Two weeks before

I've lived the last

Two weeks

Two times over

And I'm now

Going on the third

The universe was trying to give me

Another chance

To make a different

“Better” decision

But,

I didn't want it!

I may not have made the best decision

But, I stand my ground

I believe in my decision

I won't give in

My decision

Wasn't the greatest decision

For my benefit

But, I like my decision

Just not for the consequences

But, they aren't enough

To make me give in!

No! They are NOT!

Tyler Ritter 14  
For Love, Forever  
3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

Two weeks later

It happened again

Heart-stopping looks

Your eyes did send

For you, over backward

I would bend

I'd do anything

For you, my friend

I'd take you away

To all your needs I would tend

And believe me when I say

The happiness never ends

We could run away

For love, forever

We could go somewhere

That's far better

Than this world

It tries to keep us apart

If you give me the chance

I'll steal your heart

I'd keep it very safe  
Protect it with my life  
Keep you far away from  
Pain and strife  
We could run away  
For love, forever  
The connection of our hearts  
They could never sever

I won't let them  
Take you away  
No one else can  
It's my job only  
I'll take you away  
Far away from this place  
With not enough love  
And too much hate  
I'm telling you that  
Here we can't stay  
So come with me  
I will take you away

I have eyes

Focused only on you  
My gaze never strays  
From my love that's true  
I hope my presence  
Can help you through  
If you hit a rough spot  
You know what to do  
Give me a call  
I'll be there fast like I flew  
Anything to help  
Yeah, it I will do  
You've helped me  
Now I get a turn too  
So take my hand  
And I'll guide us through

Your green eyes  
Give me strength  
For you I'd go  
To any length  
Your hair is long  
Your skin is soft  
You pull me close

Like light pulls a moth

Wherever you are

I want to be there

At your pretty face

For hours I could stare

If I had a choice

I'd always be with you

To you I never lie

That is true

We could run away

For love, forever

Go far away

And be together

Together, forever

I'm telling you

There's nothing better

And that is true

To always be with you

Always have you near

To always have your lovely voice

Floating in my ear

The thought alone

Makes my heart beat fast

Our love

Forever would last

Baby, you're for me

There's no doubt

I want to be yours always

And never without

My girl

Whom I love so much

She makes me smile

With just a touch

I feel like flying

When her hand is in mine

It's safe to say

That I'm on Cloud Nine

She's my love

Forever and now

I'll love her always

And that is my vow