

The Clowns Who Play

The forgotten territory of clown street was stirring from its sleep.

It all started with a dangerous experiment, a moment of failure and a few escaped clowns. But the consequences of this event turned out to be scarier. On any random day, the terrible clowns put a curse on the streets of a town of their choosing. They put everyone to sleep, except a select few. Usually children.

And then they came out to play.

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Alex threw off his shoes grumpily and plopped down onto the sofa. He sat for a while and then got up to get ice cream. And then sat down again. He usually watched television before his parents got home but today was different. He was bored. Or was it boredom? More like a strange nervousness. But he didn't really know why.

He opened the front door and peered down the street. Nothing. He slipped on his shoes and went out for a walk in the neighbourhood. But it was like a big shadow was over him, over his house, over his whole town. Everything was a shade darker, a degree cooler and no one was around. As if out of nowhere he spotted a stain on the neatly kept sidewalk. Not just any stain, a blood stain! The stain grew into dripples, dripples of blood leading around the corner. He followed until he saw a knife laying on its side. Alex felt sick, he fainted, and darkness grabbed him.

When he opened his eyes he was in the back of a truck. He felt so exhausted that he couldn't move his legs. He heard the cries of a few other kids that were probably there with him, but it was too dark so he couldn't check. The truck finally came to a stop and the door banged open.

The bright light of the grey sky blinded his eyes, like he hadn't seen the outside for 24 hours. Alex's stomach rumbled as he looked out at the abandoned street in front of him. It was getting dark too. It seems whoever brought them here didn't want to show themselves. But why did they let them go now?

The other children sobbed, and one whimpered, "I think we're in clown street..." "Clown street?" Alex asked, terrified.

"Don't you know? Something evil curses the streets of this town, making everyone fall asleep. I heard about it from my dad." Said one boy.

"But I thought it was only a story!" said another kid.

Alex suddenly stood up and asked, "Then why are we still awake?"

Everyone looked confused, nobody knew the answer. Quietly, a small kid said, "It's because the clowns are coming to play with us."

Fear gripped the children, and some began to scream. They all suddenly knew that the clowns were probably the ones that kidnapped them.

Alex jumped down from the truck and looked around for cover. Nothing was stirring, not even a mouse, like the predators were watching somewhere quietly. And then there it was. The first clown. Its head slowly ascended into view behind the window of an empty store. It was so scary Alex could barely look, one glance and all he could think to do was run. He ran and ran until his legs could no longer carry him. He found a baseball bat and waved it at an oncoming clown, but it only

laughed. He could hear the other children screaming. Alex ran towards them, and that's when he figured it out. The clowns *want* the children to run. They *need* the children to play. But what if they just stopped 'playing'?

The drainage pipes. That's it!

He grabbed the other kids and they squeezed into a small pipe, just big enough for them, but not for the clowns. They sat very still, squished and sticky. All they could do was wait, wait until morning. Wait until the cursed time was up. But the clowns peered in from the outside with horrifying smiles, coaxing them out.

"Don't listen to them!" Alex screamed.

The clowns got angrier and angrier. They tried to squeeze in, their arms stretched out to grab them. But then, they stopped. They disappeared. The children waited even longer for fear the clowns were still around.

And then sirens were heard. Police sirens!

The town had awakened, and help was coming. The children yelled out to the policemen who were searching for them. Finally, they were found and one-by-one, they climbed out of the small pipe.

But the mystery of clown street was still alive, and they never knew when next the curse would come, and when next the clowns would come out again to play.