

ENJOY THE SEASON

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While growing up in a small Wisconsin community in the 50's and 60's, I don't recall being afraid of anything. There were things that made me uncomfortable, but not scared.

When in school, I ALWAYS knew when I'd be called on to recite. A tingling feeling enveloped me, and I would start to fidget. I actually heard my name called before it actually was. Eerie, but not scary.

The horror movies of the day, Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, The Werewolf, etc. were exciting, but not scary. I wondered why other kids were frightened. At the end of the pictures, they laughed and joked. They enjoyed being scared.

Nope. As a kid, nothing scared me. Not house sounds at night, not storms, not speaking to adults or before a group. Nothing.

Almost imperceptibly, things changed. I was under the impression that with adulthood came confidence, control, resolve. Superficially, perhaps, but every one of us has something of which we are afraid, whether we are conscious of it or not. The usual concerns of middle agers could be frightening to most if they were not of such magnitude. The national debt, the financial status of the social security system and SSI, GNP, foreign policy, illiteracy, crime. Personally, I find them to be more aggravating and frustrating than frightening. What is scary is the incompetency (or loyalty) of the dunderheads who have and have had it within their grasp to change at the least in part all of the above and more. Things are out of control. But enough of this.

What I could not determine was exactly when or why a double headed dragon appeared to me during adulthood. One head represented the destructive forces of nature; the other represented evil.

As I expounded upon in a previous APA V, violent storms don't just scare me, they terrify me. But after moving here from Tornado Alley in 1986, this dragon's head has withered. On to the second.

Several times a year, I had nightmares. Not just scary dreams, but rather horrifying experiences involving spirits. The settings were always large empty houses. There were areas in the houses where I knew that I should not explore, but I ventured forth as humans do.

In a passageway or before a closed door, the air became still, cold and dank, I never continued on at that point. Occasionally, upon my retreat, I was pursued by an ethereal form. The sight of it caused my limbs grow so cold that they became numb. My heart pounded and my lungs ached from trying to breathe air that

wasn't there. Was it my time to die? Why didn't the thing ever DO anything to me except fly over my head? I didn't ponder the points. The form was terrifying enough to cause me to awaken, race to the bathroom, change my sweat soaked pj's and sit with my forefinger on my carotid until my heart rate dropped below 100 BPM.

After a few years too many of going through this agony, my dream changed direction. I believe that I have always been secure enough in my faith to overcome evil. Yes, I believe that evil is real and that it is powerful beyond our imagination. But one night as the form was streaking straight at my face, its sickening screams exploding from its gaping mouth, I stopped. I stared at where I thought eyes should be and bellowed, "Go ahead. Do it!" Its screeches ceased, and the form flew past me and out an open window. Wimp. Since that night, no spirits have invaded my dreams.

In retrospect, the dream episodes seem amusingly absurd. You see, it dawned on me recently that these dreams started just after the release of Ghostbusters.

So, especially during this season when emphasis is on beings of the spirit world, let's keep things in perspective and enjoy.

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