



Graphic by Alyson Danielson

VOL. 4 NO. 1: October 2022

Southwestern High School's Student Newspaper

Homecoming 2022 Recap

By Kira Ricker

JAMESTOWN, N.Y. – From sunrise to sunset, Southwestern students enjoyed a memorable weekend while attending the senior sunrise, football game and dance.

The class of 2023 started the weekend off at the football field early Friday morning for the senior sunrise. Later that day, students packed the bleachers at the football field to watch the Homecoming football game against Salamanca. To complete the weekend, students displayed their best dance moves Saturday night at the homecoming dance in the elementary school cafeteria.



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Photo submitted by Faith Hamilton



Welcome Ms. Armstrong.
Photo by Janmanshi Padhya

Welcome New Trojan Staff!

By Janmanshi Padhya

Have you noticed new faces around the school?

If yes, then that is because we have four new staff members!

Ashley Armstrong and Marc Scapelitte are the new math faculty, Caylea Adams is the new attendance secretary and Sarah Myers is a new aide joining Southwestern High School this year.

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MEET JOAH: The Delightful Dane

By Nate Lewis

JAMESTOWN, N.Y.

-You may know him as the Great Dane, but who really is this Danish Giant named Joah Mølholm?

Joah is a senior exchange student from Denmark, staying in the U.S. for one year. The main reason he decided to travel to the U.S. is to broaden his international understanding beyond Denmark. Some of the extracurricular activities that Joah partakes in include cross country, as well as various Rotary (the exchange agency) activities.

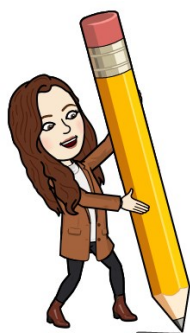


Photo by Ms. Beaton

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Letter from the Editor

Thank you for picking up the first edition of the Trojan Times for the 2022-2023 school year!

This is a re-building year for the Trojan Times, since the entire staff of the newspaper graduated last year. However, a new group of enthusiastic student-reporters have stepped up to fill their shoes. They've worked very hard over the last two months to bring you this paper. Inside its pages, you'll find a reflection on the first two months of school: full of Homecoming events, sporting accomplishments and new faces that you might've seen around Southwestern.

In the future, you will see students themselves serving as editors for the Trojan Times. This paper is meant to be a publication for the students, by the students. With that in mind, if you'd like to get involved, please consider attending our newspaper meetings! We meet every first and third Wednesday after-school in room 115.

Thanks for reading, and we hope you enjoy this edition!

My. Beaton

NEWS

HOMECOMING

Continued from page A1:



Students pose at the Homecoming dance.

Senior Sunrise

Southwestern seniors set their alarms extra early on the morning of Friday, Sept. 30 for a new tradition: the senior sunrise.

School president and student council member, Liz Kane, proposed the idea of a class gathering before school to celebrate being seniors. This idea was put into action by the class of 2023's advisors, Mr. Baglia and Mr. Frisbee, as they coordinated the event. So, at 7 a.m. the senior class

met at the football field to enjoy games, donuts, and a beautiful sunrise.

This event proved to be a success as Mr. Frisbee stated the event is, "Definitely something the class of 2023 kind of started as a tradition that will become the main staple event for the senior class on Homecoming weekend."

Homecoming Football Game

The Trojans hosted the Salamanca Warriors at 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30 for the Homecoming football game. The bleachers were a sea of white as the theme of the game was a "white out." At half time the homecoming King and Queen were crowned: twins Aryana and Michael Butterfield.

The Trojans battled their way to a 15-10 win over the warriors, where Mitchell Pike caught an interception in the final quarter to clinch the lead. Trojan fans could not contain their excitement and decided to storm the field at the conclusion of the game. This moment was short-lived as they were directed off the field seconds after.

"Wait until the game is over," said Coach Burkholder, when asked to give the fans advise. "We can't risk a penalty at that point in time!"

Homecoming Dance

The weekend was wrapped up by the Homecoming dance on Saturday, Oct. 1, and went from 7-10 p.m. in the elementary school cafeteria. The tickets for the dance cost \$10 presale and \$15 at the door.

Hopes were high and everyone was excited, but student Matt Pannes put it best: "The DJ was really lacking this year... but it was our senior Homecoming so we just tried to make the best of it."

Overall, many people still had a good time and showed off their best dance moves. The homecoming weekend was one to remember!

And Then There Was SPIRIT WEEK

By Angelina Wilder

JAMESTOWN, N.Y. — As you walked down the hallways prior to Homecoming, you would have seen everyone in unusual and fun outfits. Did you see people in their onesies? Or maybe in cowboy hats and flannels? Why is that, you might have asked? It was spirit week!

Spirit week is a week where everyone in the high school gets to dress up, have fun and show school spirit. Spirit week at Southwestern is organized by student council and generally happens the week of the Homecoming game and dance. This school year it occurred between Sept. 26 and Sept. 30.

This spirit week consisted of pajama day, Adam Sandler day, '90s sitcom, Western and Southwestern Trojan spirit day.

"I think everybody should participate in spirit week," Mrs. Mitchener, the yearbook advisor, said. "It makes life a little bit more fun."

According to Mitchener, '90s is the theme of the 2022-2023 yearbook. "We really want to bring the '90s back," Mrs. Mitchener said. "That feeling that school is fun, school is exciting and people are friends face to face, not just on devices... let's get the pictures in the yearbook that look like a school in the '90s."

She also added that a goal of the yearbook this year is to get the entire school body involved. One way to do that was through Spirit Week.

"The '90s sitcom day has been my favorite because I saw the most participation," Braya Beaver said. "I'm really looking forward to the totally Trojan day."

The yearbook had sponsored a Totally Trojan Spirit Award that was awarded to two students who were best dressed and participated in spirit week all five days.

"I think there was actually a lot of hype and excitement over this Totally Trojan award," Ms. Mitchener said.

Seniors Jacob Johnson and Olivia Allen were the recipients of the award and received '90s prize packs.

Student council organizes spirit week every year and makes decisions on the spirit days.

"People gave suggestions within student council about what days they wanted to see, and then we had a meeting," Liz Kane, the student council president, said. "Everyone had three votes for the days that they wanted and then we chose the days with the highest votes."

Spirit week has been an annual occurrence at Southwestern for many years. Hopefully everyone is excited for the spirit weeks in the future!

Photos by Angelina Wilder



FINANCIAL COLUMN

with Southern Chautauqua FCU

By Owen Riggle

JAMESTOWN, N.Y.— The Southern Chautauqua Federal Credit Union is dedicated to helping students manage their finances without stress. So, to help further, we asked students from around Southwestern High School questions they have about our credit union and have formed this Q and A for any questions they had.

Q: What is a federal credit union and how is it different from a regular bank?

A: A Federal Credit Union is a member based, NON-profit financial institution that's run by its members, not a CEO or shareholders. Credit unions pay higher interest rates on savings accounts and charge lower rates on loans, meaning you save money. On the other hand, banks are always for-profit, and while they tend to offer competitive, low-interest rates for loans, they almost always have higher fees than credit unions.

Q: If you already have an account at another bank, can you open one at the credit union?

A: Yes, you can stop in at the credit union in room 210 in the social studies wing. You can come in and get a packet, fill it out, and bring it back with \$25 and a form of identification.

Q: Why should I get involved in the credit union and why care about finances now?

A: Right now is the best time to learn about finances. Take it from me that being responsible with my money and learning how to manage it in high school is going to make it much easier to do as an adult. And the credit union is a wonderful place to do it. We are a Community Development Financial Institution. We are focused on not just giving you the tools to manage your money but teaching you and helping you manage it.

Q: What's with the popcorn, and why the games?

A: They are engagement pieces to get people interested in walking into the room. Even if they don't want to make an account, we can at least talk about them about finances. Also, as an homage to our full locations who give out popcorn on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we give some out occasionally.

HS Library: Maker Madness

By Dustin Hendrix

JAMESTOWN, N.Y.- If you haven't noticed, the high school library has become the hub for student life at Southwestern.

The library's Makerspace has lots to offer, and students are taking advantage of it all. Whether you're working on a STEM Project or just having fun, there is something for everyone.

Available to students is a VR headset, several 3D printers, a laser engraver/carver, the Soma Dome, a vinyl cutter, three Nintendo Switches, a gaming PC, and a heat press for making t-shirts.

These machines have all been put to good use. Last year, Mrs. Cresanti's AP Language class made matching t-shirts reading "AP Week is Not for the Weak" to wear on test day. Recently, a trophy for the Mario Kart tournament was made using the 3D printers and was finished by Mrs. Brown. The school's state-of-the-art gaming PC is now being used by the Southwestern Esports team for tournaments and competitions. The stickers decorating the walls of the library were all made using the vinyl cutter.

"When a student has an idea, we make it happen," said Ms. Wright. "Every project is unique, so there is a learning process that comes along with every project. It's great for all of us to learn together...we have a lot of students teaching students."

The Southwestern help desk is a student-run group in the library that helps in tech and creating makerspace projects and is a dozen students strong.

Ms. Wright says there are plans in the works for a student-lead Makerspace class to be held in the library.

"We didn't get a lot of freshman or sophomores last year due to COVID and the mask mandates," said senior Owen Riggle. "I would really like to have more help desk members because I want to keep our library community alive."

For questions or suggestions, or if you want to join the help desk, stop in to see Ms. Wright or Ms. Lund during the day or email swright@swsk12.org.



Mario Kart Tournament Trophy



SPORTS

Sweet and Salty Senior Night

By Madison Swartz

JAMESTOWN, N.Y. - Bittersweet: a word used frequently to describe the senior night tradition. This was the term cited by senior athlete, Spencer Bell, and tennis coach Ms. Beck.

Senior night has been a tradition here at Southwestern for many years, one that every sport has been able to add to their schedule. Not only does senior night represent a celebration but also a goodbye to fellow teammates.

This tradition is a way to thank students “for all the time they put in and the things they’ve done for the program,” said Mr. Salisbury, Southwestern’s athletic director. He added that the night is also a representation of “the end of a kid’s athletic history at Southwestern.”

Senior night mostly takes place right before a home game starts, when they can get the most attendance from parents and fellow students. Students then get called out to walk on the field/court with their parents at their sides and are presented with a flower. Many pictures take place during the time after they are called out. This is when there is a proctor giving a speech or mentioning what the athlete’s future consists of. Senior night also poses as a lasting reminder to students that they must make the best of it while they can!

According to Coach Beck: “All senior nights are special because all of my seniors are special to me. I look at them like my children.”

To some parents, it is even considered emotional to watch their child walk out there, knowing they are going to graduate high school soon.

Spencer Bell’s emotion during his own senior night was bittersweet because it’s going to be exciting to move out and meet new people. However, he also does not want to leave his friends he’s made while at Southwestern, according to Bell.

Coach Beck stated, “Any member of a team in my mind is valuable. So just know your value being on the team is immense, regardless of what your role. Also, try your hardest because it is over with fast and enjoy your teammates.”



Girls Tennis photo submitted by Coach Beck.



Boys' varsity football photo submitted by Shelly Phillips.



Girls' swimming senior night, submitted by Ashlynn Swan.



Both soccer senior night photos by Shelly Phillips.

Iron Paradise:

The Story Behind Southwestern's Wellness Center

By Justin Vanstrom

JAMESTOWN, N.Y. - Blood and sweat, grunting men throwing around hundreds of pounds. B.O. plaguing the place that is supposed to be their iron paradise.

Fortunately, this is nothing near what an actual weight room is like, and the wellness center provides a laidback and open experience for all Southwestern students.

So, what exactly is the wellness center? It is an exercise center located where the old high school gym used to be. The wellness center has been in our school for about five years, and many student athletes have utilized it to their own benefit. One such student athlete is Will Hoden, who is a member of the Southwestern 1000-pound club.

The wellness center provides a “lowkey, supportive environment, where everyone is there to achieve their goals; to better themselves,” Hoden said. “In life you only have one body, so you better take care of it.”

School administrators like the superintendent, Mrs. Donahue, have pushed for a new weightroom-like environment for all to utilize. Coaches, like Mr. Sirianni, rallied behind this cause to build a new wellness center for students and athletes.

Why did the district build this center? The simple answer is: “The old weightroom was terrible, it needed work,” Mrs. Donahue said. “It was only a weight room; it did not have any of the cardio machines that



Dom the Bomb crushes his biceps in the wellness center.
Photo by Justin Vanstrom

we now have. This is not a weight room; it is a wellness center.”

A weight room is what one would call the “old, cramped converted classroom,” as described by Mr. Sirianni. To even compare the two would not do justice to how far the new wellness center has come. The district’s coaches did their own research on colleges’ weight room and reported what they liked about them to help visualize a new wellness center. Mrs. Donahue described the wellness center as a “collective responsibility.” The responsibility? To aid students towards healthier lifestyles.

The district has given the tools to build the healthier lifestyle - all you have to do is use them! Maybe identify a goal to what you would like to achieve in the weight room. “People lift for fun, for their sports, to increase athleticism, or for the aesthetic,” Hoden said.

Mr. Sirianni says he shows off the wellness center to his brothers and any alumni to show how far this project has come.

Most people feel intimidated by gyms, but many can attest that Southwestern’s wellness center is truly an iron paradise.



Dom the Bomb benching 135 pounds.
Photo by Justin Vanstrom

XC Place Second, #1 In Our Hearts

By William Dorman

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Southwestern's Varsity Boys Cross Country (XC) team placed second of 50 placing schools in their race at the 57th annual McQuaid Invitational.

McQuaid first started in 1965 and is the largest high school sponsored XC meet in the country.

This year, there were 237 competing teams from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New York and Canada, according to McQuaid Meet Director Todd Stewart.

XC runners did very well this year with Nate Lewis coming in second place with a time of 15:39, Trey Faulk coming in eighth, Donavin Brown coming in 25th, Lucas Svenson coming in 56th, Sam Kautzman coming in 68th, Jake Johnson coming in 103rd and Logan Hren coming in 262nd. On average, the team ran 17 minutes and two seconds for the three-mile race, with an average mile time of 5:36.

Southwestern's XC certainly had a blast at this year's McQuaid.

"There was a wide range of food trucks, thousands of items of merchandise, and an amazing spirit in the park itself," Stewart said. It's not just the food and merchandise that make event memorable, however.

"[The invitational] broadens horizons," according to Coach Lewis, "It's a very social atmosphere with team bonding. It's often the highlight of runners' year."

The team captain and smaller Lewis, Nate, gave insight



Southwestern accepts second place plaque.

Photo submitted by Kenji Walters



Runners at McQuaid. Photo submitted by Kenji Walters

into the atmosphere at McQuaid describing it as "continuously competitive." Small Lewis says he is happy with his position and that he improved greatly compared to last year.

"Stepping up to the start line and seeing a hundred other runners and waiting for the starting pistol; it's exhilarating," said small Lewis.

This year's McQuaid was also picturesque for a different reason. Last year at the McQuaid Invitational, Southwestern placed first, but disaster struck when McQuaid volunteers forgot to give the first-place trophy. Though, Stewart reports that awards were given more accurately this year than in the past.

Along with bringing home second place from this year's invitational, runners also brought home the missing trophy from last year. For some like small Lewis, they were finally able to receive the gratification that the trophy brought with it.

As small Lewis put it best, "They can pry the trophy from my cold dead hands."



Nathan Lewis takes second.

Photo by Kenji Walters

PERSONAL PROFILES

JOAH

Continued from page A1

Joah is one of the kindest students to walk the halls of Southwestern, according to Mrs. Beaton, Joah's English teacher. He has made numerous friends and "fits in really well," Mrs. Beaton said. Kindness is a word that seems to follow Joah wherever he goes.

"Kindness," Jake Johnson, a fellow senior and friend of Joah, said, "Is one of my favorite qualities of Joah. He goes out of his way to make someone else's day better, even if it's in a small way."

Joah has assimilated into American culture extremely well, according to Joah. His transition was seamless, experiencing very little cultural barriers.

"I considered giving him a pass on our grammar exercises, but he said, 'No I want to contribute,'" Mrs. Beaton said.

She added, however, that one major difference in the school system is the changing of classes, for in Denmark students stay in the same class all day. This was confusing for Joah at first.

Aside from these previous attributes, Joah is cited by his peers as "a fun guy." Some of his favorite activities outside of school are the team bonding activities with the cross country team, with his favorite memory of his time here being a dinner at Olive Garden,

due to the fact that was when he really started to get to know everyone, according to Joah. Johnson concluded that Joah is fun to be around, and "interesting to have insight into his perspective on things here in America."

So if you ever see a 6-foot-4-inch Danish gentleman roaming the halls, stop and say hi...and you might have to give him a few directions.



Map of Denmark.

Joah enjoying the States.
Photo submitted by Joah

NEW STAFF

Continued from page A1

Ms. Armstrong teaches her class.
Photo by Janmanshi Padhya

Ashley Armstrong

She loved math from a young age but wasn't sure what she wanted to do with math. Her algebra teacher inspired her to become a teacher herself. She taught for 11 years in Pennsylvania before joining Southwestern High School.

Ms. Armstrong feels good about the students she is working with. "I am excited to be here and just know that I am a teacher that you can come talk to if you ever need anything," Ms. Armstrong said.



Mr. Scapelitte teaches math in his class.

Photo by Janmanshi Padhya

Marc Scapelitte

Mr. Scapelitte is substituting for Ms. Steger as a math teacher.

After teaching math for a while, Mr. Scapelitte went back to school and got a degree in computer science. He now does work related to software and has even developed an app.

Ironically, Mr. Scapelitte likes to teach math in an old school way.

"I think (Southwestern) is a great school," Mr. Scapelitte said, "It has been an awesome experience so far. Obviously, you are going to have your ups and downs, but there have definitely been more ups." See NEW STAFF, page C2

Joah's Favorites:



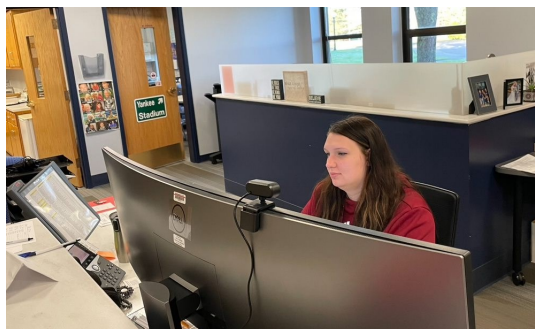
Favorite color: Green

Favorite food: Danish meatballs

Favorite tradition: New Years (big dinner and fireworks)

NEW STAFF

Continued from page C1



Ms. Adams works in the high school's main office.
Photo by Janmanshi Padhya

Caylea Adams

Ms. Adams, the new attendance secretary, attended Panama Central School and Jamestown Community College. She played soccer in high school and likes to paint.

Despite working in the main office now, she has a plan to pursue special education. She previously attended college for accounting with a minor in psychology and general education. She has a plan to pursue special education.

As an attendance secretary, she coordinates and keeps track of the students' comings and goings. "I love my job," Ms. Adams said. "I get to interact with the students which makes me happy."



Ms. Myers helps a student with her homework.
Photo by Janmanshi Padhya

Sarah Myers

Ms. Myers has been a stay-at-home mom for the past ten years with her three daughters. She believes being a mom has given her life meaning and purpose.

As an aide, Ms. Myers assists students with work in the classroom and helps teachers with whatever they may need. "I have enjoyed working here at Southwestern and have found staff to be very warm and inviting." Ms. Myers said.

GHOSTLY GALA:

What will SWCS Elementary Students Be for Halloween?

By Hannah Dearman

Getting in the Halloween spirit has always been one of the greater parts of the fall season. From spooky decorations, to sweet treats, and most importantly... costumes. Getting to dress up as our favorite movie character, animal, and so much more, was always a highlight of our younger years. The kids in our very own Southwestern Elementary school are helping to make sure that Halloween spirit lives, by continuing the tradition of dressing up for the special occasion. After asking the K-2nd graders what they wanted to be for Halloween, we received many creative answers.



Quimby's Class:

Bunny, Devil, Dog, Horse, Little Red Riding Hood, Isabella Madrigal, Spooky Ghost, Skeleton, Gumball Machine, Witch, Pirate



Minarovich's Class:

Hocus Pocus, Devil, Chicken, Steve, Sonic, Witch, Maleficent, Rainbow Butterfly, Poppy Playtime, Harley Quinn, Dinosaur, Police Officer



Ehrman's Class: Clown, Witch, Bat, Oompa Loompa, Glow Costume, County Sheriff, Venom, Michelangelo, Baby Bear, Dragon Ninja, Sonic, Princess Leia, Witch, Devil Queen, Hockey Player

Lundmark's Class: Marshmallow, Steve, Sara Sanderson, Kitty, Police, Batman, Scarecrow, Witch, Superwoman, Woody, Venom, Chocolate, Fairy



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

SPOOKY SHORT STORY CONTEST WINNERS!



Jake Johnson

Grade: 12

Story: "The Boogeyman"

Q: What is your favorite part of spooky season?

Jake: The different ways Halloween is interpreted, like through movies, story, music — everything has a different spin on the holiday.

Q: What was the inspiration for your story?

Jake: Stephen King and his types of stories. I wanted to create something that stood on its own, but also was a love letter to Stephen King.

WHAT JUDGES LIKED:

"The description of the Boogeyman."

"The ending that is open to interpretation."

"The voice of the narrator."



Cole Lynch

Grade: 10

Story: "The Pale"

Q: What is your favorite part of spooky season?

Cole: I just really like scary things. I grew up watching horror movies. The first one that terrified me was "Killer Klowns from Outer Space." But now I've grown to like scary things—they're normal to me.

Q: What was the inspiration for your story?

Cole: This story is my stress monster. It came from a time in my life when I was struggling. I started this story when I was 13 and I've been working on it ever since.

WHAT JUDGES LIKED:

"This is a true horror style."

"The premise of this story is crazy."

"I needed to know what happens."



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



THE THE

BOOGYMAN PALE



By Jake Johnson

This'll be the 5th house tonight. An easy gig, just get in, get the stuff, and get out.

Not a problem.

It's been a solid night so far. Not much of an issue, just the usual stuff; a dog barking, a sleepwalker, a busted knee. Nothing he hasn't encountered before. All he has to do is stick to the rules, and he'll be fine.

He's heard of the stories from this house, an old gothic colonial with the elderly couple who barely ever leave the house. Everyone's heard the stories, thousands in cash in the house, hundreds of items of expensive jewelry, riches beyond a thief's wildest beliefs.

If he gets this house he's set. No more debt, no more problems, no more leaky ceiling.

Maybe he can finally see his daughter again.

He snaps that thought out of his head. High expectations lead to plummeting realities, something he has had to learn the hard way.

He slid on his gloves, following Rule #17; leave no evidence. He slinks to the side of the house, making sure to avoid the windows, and following Rule #2: stick to the shadows. It's the one rule that's kept him safe for all these years. If he stays in the shadows, he can't be seen. He's done his fair share of breaking-and-entering, and if his personal count is correct, then this will be his 99th ever house. Not a bad number, given he's been doing it since high school.

He stands in the backyard, studying the back of the house. It really was a nice house, a 3-story gothic colonial with black trim and white brick. The back had a roof covering the patio, which lead up to the window which he assumed was the couple's; not the ideal way to get in.

He throws his bag up and climbs the back banister and shim-mies his way up to the roof. He walks along the roof, with his back flush against the outside wall. He makes sure to duck past all the windows as he made his way to the bathroom window next to the bedroom; this wasn't his first rodeo.

He places his hands against the window and lifts up, pushing his weight into attempting to get it open. It cracks open, but not easily. It was pretty obvious it hadn't been opened in years; there was practically a layer of paint sealing it shut. He had to do this in silence. Rule #3; make no noise. No noise means he's less likely to be seen.

He pulled his bag over and pulled out a can of WD40, being as quiet as possible while doing it, and sprays it along the edges of the window. He puts it back into his bag, and lifted the window open, this time with no problem.

Excerpt from Original Story

By Cole Lynch

Simon's footsteps heavily thump through the forest. Something is chasing him, but he doesn't know what. He decides quickly that the best option is to hide and ducks into a bush to wait the creature out.

"What in the..." he mutters under his quiet, heavy breaths.

A few minutes go by...then hours. Before he knows it, it is nighttime. He listens for any sign of life outside of his homely bush but hears nothing. After a few moments of gathering courage, he manages to get up quietly and take in his surroundings. The area is familiar to him...but he can't remember why.

He starts to search his hiking bag for anything that could help him, then pulls out a combat knife along with some grip tape. He applies the tape to his handle and proceeds with caution down a pathway. The moon is high in the sky by the time he left towards his parked car. He is keeping at a slow jog until he feels that sudden paranoia from earlier. He looks around and catches a glimpse of what was pursuing him.

It's a large white humanoid which looks malnourished.

And hungry.

"Hello?!" He calls out to it.

There's a moment of silence before suddenly, the creature starts sprinting towards him. Simon's fight or flight activates and he chooses to pursue the latter option. He turns his jog into an all-out dash in order to escape a fate he does not want to know the consequences of.

-END OF EXCERPT-



He had done it. He was in.

Now the hard part was done. All he had to do now was get the goods and get out. He pulled his mask over his face, making sure to follow Rule #4; never let anyone see your face. Even if they wake up, all they'll see is a black ski mask; nothing they can truly decipher.

He slowly makes his way into the couple's room. He could hear the old man sleeping next to him. He slid the drawer to the bedside table out. Inside, he found the old man's wallet and his keys. It's not much, but it's a good start.

He's seen these houses before. All this is nothing new to him. All show, no substance. You see it mostly with older people, they think it makes them stand out. Truth is, they're all just nameless gray faces. Nothing more than an outside of fancy and power to hide from the monstrous exterior.

There's usually one place where these types of people hide their things: on or around the fireplace. And odds are good, with the cash these bags of dust have, it's pretty well hidden.

Downstairs, there was a big, grand fireplace, a very ornate and decorated piece with carvings and decorations spreading across the width of the fireplace and the entire height of the ceiling. Back in the living room, he studied the mantle of the fireplace, looking for anything that would stick out. That's when he noticed the knob sticking out from the carved fire on the shelf. He ran his hand across the wood, feeling the grain move between his fingers. He then felt the faint outline of a box.

He pushed in, not too hard, but hard enough that the box gave way. It slowly popped out, revealing a cache of jewels and money, enough to finally support him, enough to free him from this life.

He had done it.

It was his.

Finally, after all these years, he was free, free from this world, this life that he'd been stuck in for years, all because of dumb mistakes he'd made as a kid. Mistakes that made him lose his kid. But now, he could finally see his daughter again.

He had been holding his breath this whole time, that when he finally let it out, he heard a deep sigh. He snapped his hand over his mouth, and looked around, standing completely still to await and see if anyone had been alerted. He grabbed the cash, and slinked back into the shadows, awaiting to see the light turn on upstairs, and an old man in his undies waving a shotgun around.

But that never came. The house stood still, nothing changed.

Until it did.

The shadows grew, morphing and changing around him, shrouding him in a dark smoke, engulfing him in a dark mist for which he cannot escape. It was a dark hand entrapping him in the one thing which he truly thought he himself belonged to.

That was when a velvety voice sounding like smooth honey moving through a sift, spoke, speaking as if directly into his eardrums so only he could hear.

"You live off of the pain and misfortune of others? For one to live and work for all their life to live and strive off their own hard work and energy, and you come in and steal all of the things for which they work hard for? You are truly despicable," so spoke the velvety voice.

"And I love it."

The face of a man made purely of shadows steps out of the darkness, in the smoky shape of a tall man with a black fedora, and sharp, white, shiny teeth, the only discernable facial feature that he could really see. He raised his arm, with a hand black as night and tipped with claws, running his hand down the side of the man's face, the indiscernible shape of the misty figure cut out of the night sky.

"You are probably wondering what I am," the velvety man said through grinned teeth. "Some say I am the embodiment of evil. Others say I'm just a story told to children to scare them before bed. But would you like to know the truth? Come in close."

The shadow seemed to grow tighter around the man, and pull him into the figure.

"The truth is," his smile grew wider, "I am the Boogeyman."

The man's face went white. He knew he couldn't scream, he couldn't move, he could do nothing but sit there, warm pee running down his leg, frozen in paralyzing fear.

He was at the mercy of the Boogeyman.

For once, he finally felt like his victims; in a situation with something they could never prepare for, unable what could possibly come next.

He thought about screaming, attempting to wake the couple upstairs. The Boogeyman must have seen his gaze drift up the stairs, practically reading his mind.

"You can scream all you'd like, they'll never hear you. They were dead the moment you left their room. You chose for them to die. You chose this house, you chose this life. Now I cannot let you go. You shall become my latest victim, for you are just as evil as I. We are not heroes, we are helping nobody. We are all for which this world hates most; we are evil."

On the dark streetside, the same spot where, just a mere half hour ago, a man thought this life which he has led for years would finally be over.

In reality, the only life that would be ending that fateful night, would be his own, human life, as a scream rings out into the night.

-THE END-

