

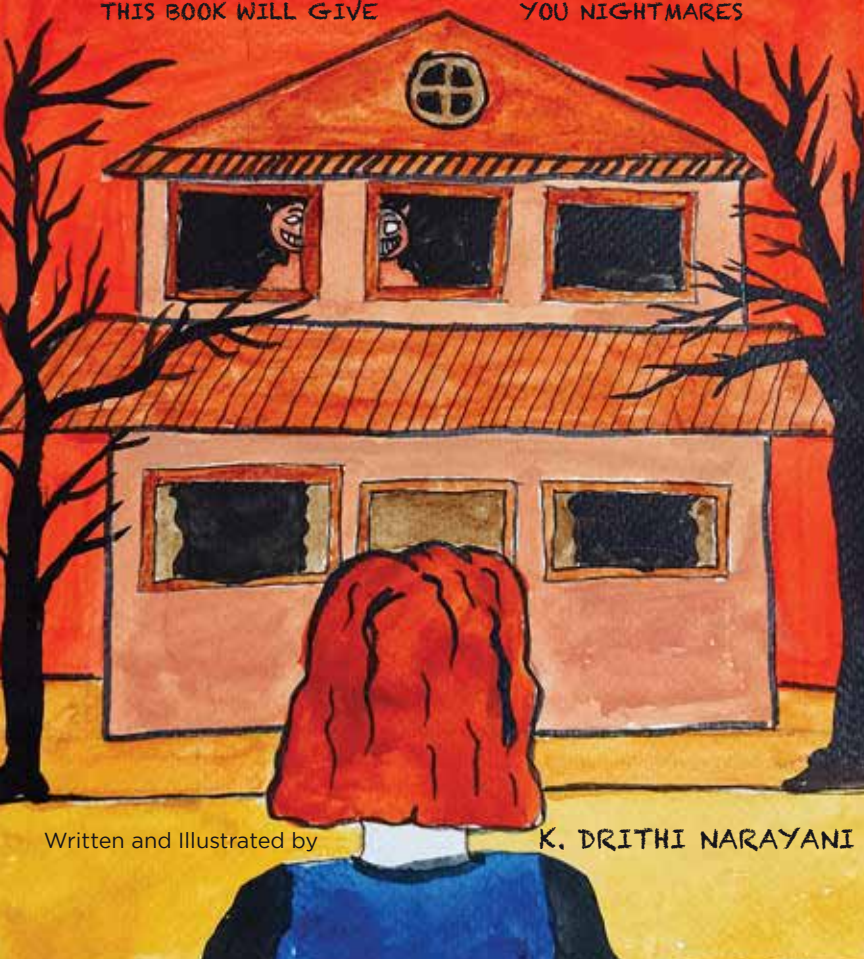
Collins

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

SHADOWS IN THE DARK

THIS BOOK WILL GIVE

YOU NIGHTMARES



Written and Illustrated by

K. DRITHI NARAYANI

SHADOWS IN THE DARK

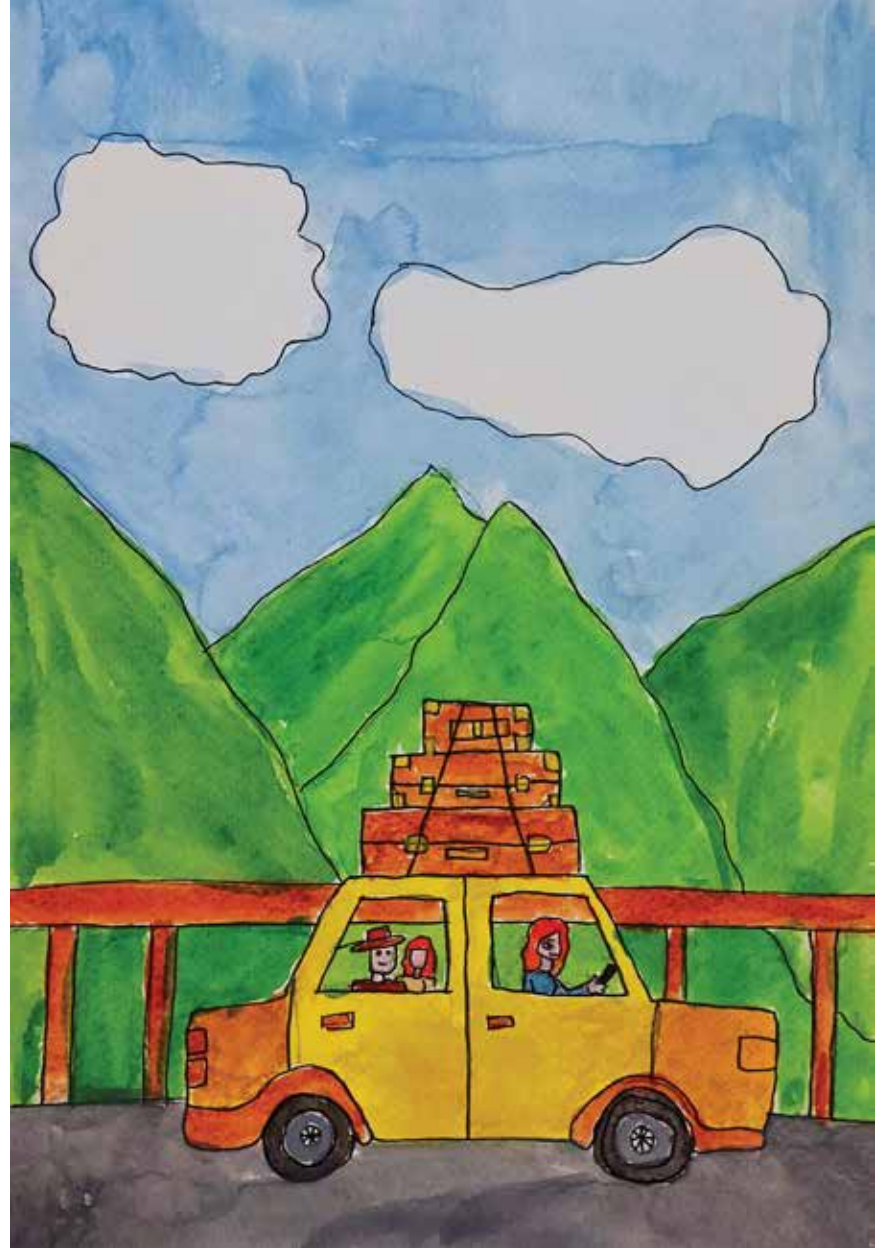
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The Grant family was excited to move into their new home. Jennifer was content watching the happiness of her three children Maya, Jack and Rosy. It's been two years since she lost her husband in an accident and it was very hard for her and the children to get over the grief. Recently, Jennifer was posted as the Editor for 'The Modernist Magazine' and was delighted to join her new job in a new city. Everyone in the family was looking for a fresh start. Maya and Jack, the year old twins were excited to go to a new school and make new friends while Rosy who was an introvert with a bit of anxiety wasn't happy with this change.



The trio siblings and their mother started their journey to the new city of Los Angeles. As they neared the place the weather felt colder and Maya said "Mom, it appears that this winter will be colder than last year but I am not bothered, its October, the month of the dead and I am excited about Halloween". Hearing this 7 year old Rosy who was spooked by the phrase 'Month of Dead' tightly held her mother who was driving the car. Jenny in a warning tone said, "Maya, stop scaring Rosy".

The Grant family reached their new home on Neumann's Street after a long and tiring journey of nearly 5 hours. It was a pleasant street with greenery everywhere and playgrounds for children. All of them gazed at their lovely two floor villa all painted in white with an open garden and a swing in it. While the family was carrying their luggage inside, a lady from the neighbourhood came out and started staring strangely at the Grant family. Jennifer tried to exchange a smile but this lady turned around and left. Jenny felt a bit awkward but then headed towards the house. The interiors of the house were very ambient and beautiful. All the furniture appeared rich and marvellous. Jenny felt overjoyed to see her children jumping and screaming all around. For a moment she felt good about buying this house and thanked her new firm for helping her find the house.



A few days passed and one day Jennifer took an off from work.. The kids left for school and Jenny was cleaning the kitchen when she suddenly heard some strange noises. At first she thought that it was her imagination but then the noises became louder. She got scared and went out of the kitchen to see that the light in the guest bedroom was flickering. She started trembling with fear but slowly opened the door. She was shocked to see that all the furniture in the room was upside down and things and clothes all over the floor. She doubted it was the work of some thief and checked the windows but they were all tightly locked. She was confused and couldn't understand what happened. She cleaned up the room and locked it.

That night after their dinner and prayers everyone went to bed. The three children were sleeping in their bedrooms and Jenny in hers. It was late around 12 o' clock when Jenny woke up to some eerie whispering voices. She felt a shiver in her spine. Picking up the courage she slowly got out of the bed and followed the voices. Surprisingly, these were coming from Rosy's bedroom. She panicked and rushed to open the door of the room to find Rosy up in her

bed talking to a doll she was holding. Jenny shouted, "What are you doing Rosy and whose doll is this?" Rosy happily replied, "Mom, I am playing and this doll was given to me by my friend Gilbert." Little surprised by the strange change in behaviour of her introverted, serious kid she said sternly, "This is not the time to play, go back to bed". After tucking her in the bed Jenny while walking back to her room kept thinking about the strange things that were going on in the house.



It was a Sunday and Jenny along with her children returned from church. Tired, all of them went for a nap. Jenny suddenly woke up to loud screams and cries of her children. She rushed towards her children's bedrooms thinking the children were having a fight with each other.



The screams were coming from Rosy's room. She tried to open the door but it was locked. She shouted , "Jack, Maya open the door." Jack replied, "Mom this lock isn't opening ...Rosy is behaving strangely... let me out mom." Jenny got worried. She looked on either side to find an Iron rod. Immediately she got hold of it and started hitting the door knob while kicking the door with her leg.

The door fell open and she was puzzled.

Jen saw that Rosy was in the air and was being thrown as if she was swinging. Rosy was thoroughly enjoying and laughing and was in such a state of trance that she didn't even notice her brother and sister crying for her. Jenny tried to catch hold of the little one but she felt a jolt as if someone strongly pushed her and dragged her out of the room. This Journalist who ignored people discussing supernatural things couldn't believe her eyes.

She immediately took the wooden cross with Jesus hanging on the wall and entered the room chanting the verses in the bible. Suddenly, Rosy fell on the bed and after an hour she came to consciousness. Peculiarly, she behaved as if she had just woken up from her sleep and didn't seem to remember anything.

Jennifer was terribly disturbed by this event. Jack was also hurt. She couldn't afford to put her children at risk. She wanted to keep them safe so immediately took them and dropped them at her mother's place. At her mother's house she couldn't sleep the whole night thinking about the incident.

Next day she drove back to L.A and directly went to meet her neighbour Mrs. Cynthia. Jenny rang the bell of the house and this old woman opened the door to give a strange look again. Jenny greeted her saying, "Good morning Mrs. Cynthia, how are you? Can I come in?" Cynthia replied, " Sure, please come in and have a seat". As Jenny sat down she was framing the questions she wanted to ask her neighbour.

Jenny asked, "Cynthia, sorry to trouble you but can you tell me if you are aware of any unfortunate incident that occurred in our house in the past?"

Cynthia hesitated, " Didn't you know before buying that this house was called the 'Terror House' and was locked for years before it was sold to you?"

Jennifer was shocked to hear the name Terror House.

"What? Terror House!" she asked

"Yes, this house was built in 1990 by the Weldon family. They lived here for more than 10 years. I heard they had a strange child who wouldn't mingle with other children nor go to school. Suddenly, one day he died and from that day on certain strange incidents occurred with their parents so they sold this house to the Castell family and left". Continued Cynthia sipping the coffee, she made for both. "It is said that the Castell family experienced strange incidents in this house and lost all their five children mysteriously within 5 months". Cynthia had a terrified face.

Jenny thanked Cynthia and left her place and proceeded to the town's Library. She started searching newspapers

of the 90's to find any news about the deaths and the House. She could trace a few articles mentioning the death of children and photos of the dead. While reading them she was suddenly shocked when she read the name Gilbert Castell among the dead children. She thought, Oh my God. Isn't it the same name Rosy mentioned to me and all the while I was thinking Gilbert was her school friend. So, Rosy was talking to his soul in the house. Thinking this she went blank for a moment and her throat dried up out of fear.

While she was moving towards her house she felt as if her legs were turning heavy and she couldn't even step forward.

What if I go back, why can't I sell this house, she thought.

Many thoughts were hovering in her mind but then she decided to deal with the problem rather than running away. God will take care of me. I need not worry, she thought and proceeded to her house.



She decided to search the house for clues and went to the guest room where she first noticed an eerie incident. She carefully observed the room and she came across a small rack full of books. Hoping she might find some clue, she started picking out books. Then she picked this heavy red book in the centre and suddenly the rack opened to show a hidden staircase facing upwards. She climbed the stairs to reach a spooky looking attic where she found dolls and paintings. She was surprised to see a fresh painting of a Sun and the name Gilbert written on it. Seeing this she ran down the stairs out of fright and closed the door of the attic. Then she ran out of the house and locked its door as well.

She started walking hastily towards the Church down the street. The only thought in her mind was, only god can help me. After her prayers she approached the father and the nuns in the church and explained the whole scenario. They immediately stepped forward to help her. All decided to conduct a ritual to call upon the soul of Gilbert that night.



It was the night of Friday and Father along with the nuns came to the house with bibles and a cross in their hand. They lit the candles all over in the living room and started praying and calling the soul of Gilbert by chanting verses in the bible. In some time they all could experience cool air blowing through them and they could see an extreme light standing in the centre.

Father asked, "Gilbert, I know this is you. You were a kind hearted boy then why are you troubling the family of Jennifer. Why don't you free yourself and go to heaven."

Gilbert said, "I was a 13 year old teenager who lived with my four siblings and parents in this house. It is not me who is troubling Jennifer's family but the demon in the house who killed all my younger siblings and ate their souls to get infinite powers. It still wants more. It left me because it doesn't eat souls of teenagers. I was in fact trying to protect Rosy from the demon. This demon is none other than Greg Weldon the son of Weldon who constructed this house. It will not leave her where ever she is please save her."

"How can we drive away this demon and save her?" asked father.

"Any Negative energy can be confronted only by an equal amount of good energy. My energy isn't enough to fight the demon. I need more kind hearted souls to help me. Tomorrow is a full moon day and the powers of demons are weakest that day. So try to gather help by then." said Gilbert.

Saturday 19th OCTOBER 2023

It was 10 o' clock in the night and the father and nuns made all the arrangements. Jennifer was with them. All started the prayers to call the good souls for help. Suddenly there was havoc, all the lights were blown off, electricity went off, air blew violently and the chairs got lifted into the air and started falling on the church mates, hurting them. All of them realized it was the DEMON.

They all kept praying. Meanwhile, Jenny got a call from her mother saying something strange was happening to Rosy and wounds were appearing on her skin and she was crying. Everyone understood that the demon was attacking Rosy for her soul. Undeterred, they started praying even more strongly and an extreme white light appeared in the middle containing many good souls which came from heaven. Jennifer was filled with happiness to see her husband's soul come along to protect them. The energy of the good souls together was

so powerful that it destroyed the demon, releasing all the souls of the dead children trapped in it. All the souls were happy and thanked Jennifer for having helped them to come out of the trap and started leaving for heaven. While all the souls were leaving the soul of Jenny's husband kissed Jenny on the forehead and bid her goodbye. She could feel that he was feeling proud and content with the way she was handling herself and raising the children. Tears of happiness rolled down her eyes.



About the Author

K. Drithi Narayani loves painting and listening to music, playing badminton and eating chicken and paneer. If she could have a super power, she would want the ability to teleport as she wants to see and experience different parts of the world. Drithi aspires to become a Fashion designer or Actor. She thinks the world would be a better place when women have equal rights, opportunities, value and pay.

Mentor

Poonam Dasilva
Dhanashri Ubhayakar

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The Grant family moved into a new house in Los Angeles. Jennifer Grant, a single parent is trying to keep her children happy after her husband's death. But, things soon turn around when strange things start happening in the house. Will Jennifer be able to keep her kids safe?