

Beginnings and Endings

<p>The monster showed up just after midnight. As they do.</p> <p>Conor was awake when it came.</p> <p>He'd had a nightmare. Well, not <i>a</i> nightmare. <i>The</i> nightmare. The one he'd been having a lot lately. The one with the darkness and the wind and the screaming. The one with the hands slipping from his grasp, no matter how hard he tried to hold on. The one that always ended with—</p> <p>“Go away,” Conor whispered into the darkness of his bedroom, trying to push the nightmare back, not let it follow him into the world of waking. “Go away now.”</p> <p>He glanced over at the clock his mum had put on his bedside table. 12.07. Seven minutes past midnight. Which was late for a school night, late for a Sunday, certainly.</p> <p>He'd told no one about the nightmare. Not his mum, obviously, but no one else either, not his dad in their fortnightly (or so) phone call, <i>definitely</i> not his grandma, and no one at school. Absolutely not.</p>	<p><i>Connections</i></p>	<p>“I don't want you to go,” he said, the tears dropping from his eyes, slowly at first, then spilling like a river.</p> <p>“I know, my love,” his mother said, in her heavy voice. “I know.”</p> <p>He could feel the monster, holding him up and letting him stand there.</p> <p>“I don't want you to go,” he said again.</p> <p>And that was all he needed to say.</p> <p>He leaned forward onto her bed and put his arm around her.</p> <p>Holding her.</p> <p>He knew it would come, and soon, maybe even this 12.07. The moment she would slip from his grasp, no matter how tightly he held on.</p> <p><i>But not this moment</i>, the monster whispered, still close. <i>Not just yet.</i></p> <p>Conor held tightly onto his mother.</p> <p>And by doing so, he could finally let her go.</p>
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