

WHAT SCARES ME

Episode 70

What scares me? Everyone has something that gives them the chills or makes them feel nervous. There are things that make your hair stand on end. In October, we celebrate Halloween in the United States. Halloween is a celebration of scary things. Many people decorate their houses with skeletons, witches, ghosts, mummies, zombies, and more. Seeing the decorations makes me wonder: What scares me?

First, horror movies scare me. I don't like horror movies at all. Suspense and music create a terrifying atmosphere in horror movies. And the villains are very frightening characters, like the clown in the movie *It* or the vampire Dracula. Simply seeing the villain gives me the chills.

Horror movies often contain violence and blood. I don't like it when the villain chases their victims. My whole body tenses up, and sometimes I jump and scream when the villain suddenly appears out of nowhere to attack.

After watching a horror movie, I'm afraid of the dark. I'm usually nervous in the dark simply because I can't see. But after watching a horror movie, the darkness scares me. I imagine that there's a bad person hiding in the dark who is going to attack me, just like the villain in the movie.

I've been in complete darkness in caves, and I don't get the chills because I know where I am. But if I don't know what's in the darkness with me, I get nervous. Maybe what scares me isn't the darkness itself, but what is hiding in it. When I'm working late at home and need to walk to the kitchen, I turn on the lights because I don't want to see anything moving in the darkness.

On my list of things that scare me in the dark are mice. I don't like mice at all. And it's terrible because mice find ways to get into my house every year. Once, I was taking something out of a cabinet when a mouse ran right across my hand. Ever since then, I've been a little afraid to put my hand into spaces where I can't see very well.

When I see a mouse, I scream and jump. I don't know why, but when I see a mouse, my body reacts as if the mouse were right on top of me. I get the feeling of little mouse feet running along my arm or leg. Just thinking about it gives me the chills! Then I set traps. I don't want mice running around my house. But catching mice scares me, too, because then I have to get rid of them, and I really don't like doing that at all.

Other creatures that frighten my friends don't scare me. Spiders and bats don't bother me. I know that spiders' eight legs frighten some people, especially when they have hairy legs, like tarantulas. I've held spiders in my hand, even poisonous ones like

black widows, and they don't scare me. Bats don't scare me either, which is interesting considering that they're basically mice with wings. But I like bats because they eat mosquitoes, and I don't like mosquitoes.

One of my friends is very afraid of snakes. Snakes don't scare me, but they really scare her. She's also afraid of anything that looks like a snake. My friend and I walk around the neighborhood a lot, and she jumps whenever she sees a rope on the ground because she thinks it's a snake. Once, we saw a snake in the street. It was moving in our direction, and she started running. It wasn't a big snake, and I was curious and wanted to get a better look at it, but my friend screamed and ran away.

At first, I was afraid of being alone in nature. Now I spend a lot of time alone, and there aren't many things in nature that frighten me. But there are still some things that scare me.

I'm afraid of wild animals. It's ironic because I also want to see wild animals when I'm out in nature. Some wild animals don't scare me because they aren't aggressive, such as squirrels, deer, and birds. Other animals can attack, and they frighten me a little, but I still want to see them. For example, bears typically don't attack people. When I see a bear, I just say, "Hey bear," and the bear runs away. But I'm afraid a bear might attack me at night. That's why I don't keep any food with me in my tent.

Another wild animal that scares me is the moose. Moose in the United States and Canada are very tall and have enormous antlers. They defend their territory and can kill people simply by hitting them with their legs. When I was young, a moose attacked my friend's car because the car was parked in its territory. I want to see a moose from a safe distance.

The wild animal that scares me the most is the cougar, or mountain lion. Mountain lions scare me because they are very elusive and strong. There are many stories about mountain lions attacking people. There are cougars in the mountains where I live. There are videos of mountain lions walking through neighborhoods. I've never seen a mountain lion on any of my hikes, and I never want to see one. They really scare me.

Another thing in nature that might surprise you is that I'm afraid of being high up in the air. I'm very afraid of heights. When I'm high above the ground, I feel as if I'm going to fall and hurt myself. I get very nervous and feel like I can't go on. Sometimes I pause and talk to myself. I tell myself, "You can do it! You're not going to fall! You're strong!"

This might be surprising because I really enjoy climbing mountains and being above the tree line. I've worked hard to overcome my fear of heights. Twenty years

ago, I was afraid to stand on a ladder! Now I can climb ladders without a problem and climb over rocks and up mountains. But I'm still afraid of steeper mountains.

Another activity I enjoy but that also scares me is skiing. I love cross-country skiing, but my children prefer downhill skiing. I'm afraid of going fast on skis. My heart pounds when I go fast, and I'm afraid of falling. (I'm not so young anymore, and falling hurts a lot!) When I ski, I stick to the green runs, or sometimes the blue runs, because the black diamond runs really scare me.

The combination of height and speed really frightens me. That's why I'm afraid of roller coasters. My children and I went to Universal Studios in Florida. There, we rode the VelociCoaster. This roller coaster goes incredibly fast and reaches great heights. I was terrified. I screamed a lot. When the ride ended, my whole body was shaking from all the adrenaline. Even though I was scared, I also rode another terrifying roller coaster: the Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit. The things I do and the terrors I overcome for my children!

I'm not afraid of driving fast on highways, except in cities. Heavy traffic scares me because I don't want to get into an accident. I live in the country, and I feel a kind of claustrophobia when I have to drive in the city with lots of fast-moving traffic.

The things that scare me don't make me weak. I do things that frighten me all the time. I think that if I do the things that scare me, I'll be less afraid the next time. Also, I want to teach my children that we shouldn't avoid things simply because they frighten us. The first time I went zip-lining in Costa Rica, I was very scared. When I went zip-lining in Belize, I wasn't scared at all, and I had a great time.

At the same time, it's okay to be a little afraid in life. Nervousness is one way our bodies identify danger. It makes us more alert. And the adrenaline that comes with nervousness makes us stronger. My fears make me stronger.

What about you? Are you afraid of the dark or of heights? Are you afraid of bears or snakes? Are you afraid of monsters in the night? What gives you the chills? What makes you nervous? What scares you?



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