

Something about that boy

by H.L. Pauff

There was something about the boy that made me uneasy. Maybe it was the reverse widow's peak on his forehead or the way he wiped away his snot with the back of his hand. It could have been his red flannel shirt that reminded me of the hillbillies from the mountain that used to terrorize me at school or the orange sneakers that looked so out of place with his khaki slacks. Whatever it was, I didn't like him.

"There's something weird about that kid," I leaned over and whispered to my wife.

She put down her magazine and rolled her eyes. "Are you kidding? You're really going to start this again? You almost got us arrested when you told the hotel manager that the clown looked dangerous."

"That was different. I have a..."

"A feeling. Yeah I know," she said, returning to her magazine. "You're such a weird paranoid freak sometimes. It's just a sick kid. Close your eyes and go to sleep. It's a long train ride home."

I reclined my chair back as far as it would go and closed my eyes. It was just a kid, but he was getting to me. I don't know how long it took me to fall asleep, but when I finally did, I slipped into a dream and found myself on the train. People were yelling and screaming as the little boy stood from his seat and opened his jacket to reveal sticks of dynamite strapped to his chest.

When I jolted awake with a yelp and stood from my seat, the other passengers on the train were giving me strange looks and my wife was covering her face with her hand in embarrassment.

"Sit down," she demanded.

"I had the worst dream," I whispered. "The little boy stood up and..."

Right on cue, the little boy stood from his seat and began to shuffle down the aisle way, sniffing and coughing as he went. My

hands tightened around the arm rests. "Oh no. It's happening. It's happening!"

I tried to stand back up, but my wife held onto my sleeve. "Don't you dare," she said. I ripped away from her, but she caught me across the face with a slap. The passengers looked back over at us and I sank into my seat, holding my cheek. The boy shuffled by us and into the bathroom without incident.

"When we get home, you're going to the doctor," my wife said.

When a six foot tall, three horned scaled monster emerged from the bathroom in place of the little boy, I wanted to tell my wife "Look, I was right!", but I was too busy running for my life.

