

No Reading After Dark

By Haven Walkur ([original post](#))

This is a room in the hotel, not a denizen thereof...but I think it's sufficiently creepy to offer here.

When a guest checks into this particular room in the hotel, all seems normal. The room is a clean, comfortable and well-appointed double, with a spotless white wool carpet and new-looking curtains and bed covers. However, guests that *read* in the room after dark will have a less than pleasant stay....

If any book, newspaper or other reading matter is opened in the room after dark, the pages will appear to have been spattered with a fine spray of reddish-brown droplets, now quite dry. This also applies to the room's phonebook. (If the reading matter is an E-book, the *screen* will seem to have been spattered with the mysterious droplets.)

Any guest who tries to remove the droplets will find they can be wiped away normally with a wet cloth and a little soap. But any guest who does this, or *anything else* that causes him or her to be distracted from their reading matter, will have an unpleasant surprise when he/she looks at it next.

The droplets on the pages are now red and wet, and they smear if touched. If the guest checks other pages in the book, each page has more of the wet, red droplets...and now there are little clumps of something gray and greasy speckled across the pages. (If the guest has an E-book, the red droplets and gray specks appear on the page *inside* the screen.)

Now the guest will begin to hear a dull thumping or booming in the corridor outside, as if someone were walking slowly down the hall towards the guest's room and slamming their fists into the walls and doors on the way. When the guest looks at the bevelled mirror opposite the bed, he/she will suddenly see a bright red liquid running and dripping down the splattered glass.

The white carpet isn't white anymore; near the bed it's almost scarlet, and it squelches underfoot when the guest walks. The bed linens are dripping, as if someone had upended an oil drum of something red over the bed. The thumping and banging is getting closer and *louder*...and suddenly, the phone rings. The phone's white plastic is spattered with sticky red and more little clots of gray. If the guest answers the phone, a shrill, breathless voice on the other end babbles, "It's out, I tell you, it got out and it's in the hotel now - !"

The voice breaks off with a shriek and the door shudders under a perfect barrage of thunderous banging. The doorknob rattles furiously as if someone were twisting it from side to side - the guest can see it moving - the air smells of suddenly of vinegar and hot copper - and all the lights go out.

Silence.

The lights can be turned on normally, to reveal that everything is as it should be again. There is nothing amiss in the room; no red droplets in the books, no banging on the door and the mirror is clean. The guest is left to wonder if it were all a terrible hallucination...and likely as not, will insist on changing rooms that night.

There are no further disturbances for the guest, until he/she checks out of the hotel. The next time the guest opens his/her suitcases after check out, that guest will find that he/she needs to buy all new linens...because every white item in the suitcases has somehow managed to get covered in

spatters of dried rusty-brown.

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