

Prologue - There is a Monster Under My Bed – Early July 2018

The nerve-conduction test leaves me shaking and sweaty. I tell Dr. Sampson, “There is a monster under my bed. I can hear it breathing as I lay awake at night. Sometimes it scratches the underside of my mattress. It probably has claws.”

Dr. Sampson nods at me, and something in her sideways glance says she thinks I’m crazy. She pushes her black framed glasses up her nose, as I explain, “Sometimes I look under the bed, and in the moonlight, I can see the outline of the beast. It has a shape I can’t make out, but there are huge, pointy teeth and glowing, red eyes.”

The doctor mumbles, “Hmm. Interesting,” like she might get it. She flips through the papers on her desk and makes a few notes on the sheet marked *pedigree*.

“There are some people who may be uncomfortable with a monster living under their bed. My husband may even be the kind of person who would get a bigger comforter and throw it over the bed, hoping the creature would just go away. I’m not that kind of person.”

Dr. Sampson smiles. She snatches a ballpoint pen out from the front pocket on her lab coat and clicks it on. She fills out a lab order. As she scribbles, she asks me, “What kind of person *are* you?”

“The kind who flips the mattress on its side. The kind who grabs an Uzi and nukes that motherfucker off the planet.”

She nods and quietly hands me the lab slip, which will allow me to bypass my insurance company and get the genetic test for ALS.