



very quietly tiptoe out. As she left my room I had a feeling of dread wash over me. I remember wondering if I was feeling that way because I was missing out on the trip, or simply because I didn't want to be alone all day. My thoughts were hastily interrupted by the sound of my front door opening and my mother playfully saying goodbye to our dog. I felt overwhelmed and panicked. I wanted to get up and say goodbye before they left, but get up was the last thing that I could do.

My body felt heavy and detached. It felt as if a bunch of vines were wrapping around me, clutching my body tighter and tighter. The room was entirely silent and ominous. I looked towards my door and my stomach plummeted. My body went numb and my eyes widened. There, across the room, was a little girl. Clothed in a nightgown with long black hair and a ghostlike complexion, she just stood there. This was the little girl who occasionally visited me in my nightmares, but this time I wasn't asleep.

I tried to scream but nothing came out. My mouth felt parched and thick. I strained to sit up, but to my disbelief, I couldn't move an inch. I blinked hard: maybe I was just seeing things. When I opened my eyes, the little girl was even closer. Bewildered, I grasped my hair and attempted to yank my head up, but again nothing happened. I sat there crying and ripping out my hair in attempt to protect myself from this menacing figure for what felt like forever. Every time I blinked, she got closer and closer until she was right at the end of my bed. I could feel her lifeless body pressing

against the mattress, and then as fast as she appeared she was gone. Overwhelmed with pain from trying to scream, I was finally able to sit up. Petrified and trembling, I sat there staring at my bloody hands from tearing my hair out.

All I could do was ask myself over and over, what just happened? I genuinely feel for every other person who has woken up and had to ask themselves the same question. Although being paralyzed while we sleep is a way for our bodies to protect ourselves and others around us while we dream, it's a very distressing thing to know it happens to you when you are the most vulnerable. Since this chilling experience of sleep paralysis I have never slept the same again. I now go to bed every night praying that I won't wake to another apparition of that child.